

Hafa Adai!

Swift Air CFO unaware of
\$1.5M 'bridge loan'. » **PAGE 2**

Then-president of Saipan
company arrested in China. » **PAGE 5**

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75¢

Saipan Fresh Market owner is missing



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Saipan Fresh Market in Garapan temporarily closed yesterday as its owner, Zhi Yuan Li, (inset) has been reported missing since Saturday afternoon. Police found Li's Toyota Tacoma pickup truck abandoned near Obyan Beach on Sunday morning.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The owner of Saipan Fresh Market in Garapan has been reported missing since Saturday and police recovered his car abandoned near Obyan Beach on Sunday morning, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

» **Police recover
businessman's
car abandoned
near Obyan
Beach**



Missing businessman Zhi Yuan Li, 43, is the nephew of Hai Ren Li, one of the two Chinese farmers who were murdered and their bodies dumped at the old runway in Koblerville last November.

There is no information yet whether the businessman's disappearance is connected to the double homicide involving the two Chinese farmers.

As of press time, Department of

See MISSING on Page 4

Public market adds hours, outlook brightens

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

The \$60,000 newly infused funds for the Garapan Public Market has been deposited into their account, according to an official of the CNMI Farmer's Cooperative Association, which runs the market.

With these funds, they already

bought new equipment, will have a phone number for the first time, and will extend their operation hours, among other things, according to co-operative secretary Isidoro Cabrera yesterday.

The money was appropriated by the Saipan and Northern Island Legislative Delegation last month. The funds were received last week and

deposited in full that same day, according to Cabrera.

He said the market has already started to put up a chiller and other equipment to support daily operations

The market is now open Monday to Wednesday, from 10am to 6pm, as of yesterday. On Thursdays, they open at the same time but close at 7pm.

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Military could have stake in proposed ESA listing

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

The U.S. military could have a stake in the proposed listing of 23 Marianas plant and animal species under the Endangered Species Act, for which

public comments were reopened this month. They first closed in December last year.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, out of deemed threats to these species, have proposed that two of these spe-

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BUSINESS

The tourist numbers in Paris are dropping following the terror attacks.

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ASIA

Pope Francis leaves Manila after drawing a record crowd of 6 million.

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LIFE & STYLE

"American Sniper" attempts to describe war "in a way it hadn't been portrayed before."

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Local

Swift Air CFO unaware of \$1.5M 'bridge loan'

Nick Huska, chief financial officer of Swift Air, was not aware that their company had asked Saipan Air Inc. for a "bridge loan" of \$1.5 million that was apparently urgently needed to perform their agreement with Saipan Air.

In his deposition, Huska stated that he does not recall knowing that in May and June of 2012, Swift Air then-chief restructuring officer Donald A. Stukes was negotiating with Saipan Air Inc. for an additional

sum of \$1.5 million that Stukes had styled as a "bridge loan."

Huska also does not recall if he ever heard of any discussions about possibly getting more money from Saipan Air to enable Swift Air to perform the ACMI (aircraft, crew, maintenance, and insurance) agreement that it signed.

Huska also replied that he does not know anything about a discussion about a personal guarantee for obtaining a loan in May or June 2012 relating to

the Saipan Air operations.

Saipan Air Inc. filed last week in federal court excerpts of Huska's deposition of testimony that was taken by Saipan Air counsel Steven Pixley last August in Phoenix, Arizona.

Pixley disclosed in court documents that on May 31, 2012, Swift Air then-chief executive officer Jeffrey Conry called Saipan Air chief operating officer Adam Ferguson several times on the phone, stating that they urgently needed a \$1.5 mil-

lion in "bridge loan" in order to perform their agreement with Saipan Air.

Pixley said Conry introduced Saipan Air to Stukes at this time.

Pixley said Stukes identified himself as a "financial advisor" affiliated with ASI Advisors LLC, but failed to disclose to Saipan Air that he was a minority owner of Swift Air.

Pixley said Stukes expressly represented to Saipan Air during these discussions that the defendants would be able to

perform the Saipan Air program if the \$1.5 million was paid.

In its lawsuit, Saipan Air is seeking \$2,541,370.78 in compensatory damages and \$10 million in punitive damages against Conry and Swift Air director of operations Boris Van Lier.

Last month, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona ruled that Saipan Air's fraud claim against Conry and Van Lier shall proceed, but not against Stukes.

The trial, which will com-

mence Feb. 2, will be against Conry and Van Lier relating to the fraud claims.

Conry and Van Lier are currently employed by Arizona-based Swift Air, which emerged from bankruptcy in 2013.

Saipan Air filed the racketeering lawsuit against Conry, Van Lier, and Stukes in July 2012.

Swift Air filed for bankruptcy protection in Arizona shortly after notifying Saipan Air that it would not deliver two 757 aircraft and one 737 aircraft for Saipan Air's program. Saipan Air was unable to sue Swift Air directly because of the bankruptcy filing. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**

Tebuteb hopes casino industry won't compromise environment

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb (Ind-Saipan) acknowledged that the casino industry could be a great benefit for the people of Saipan, but warned that Best Sunshine International Ltd.'s envisioned 4,000-room integrated casino resort could also come with some pitfalls.

"The prospect about the recent casino gaming industry on the island of Saipan must not be taken for granted. Such an industry as presently envisioned promises tremendous social and economic opportunities and benefits for the residents of the CNMI. Simultaneously, though, this industry comes with many challenges. As we have learned from our past public endeavors into other industries, such as the garment industry on Saipan and the casino gaming industry on Tinian, we can only enjoy enduring benefits from new opportunities if we attend to their accompanying challenges with vision and vigor," he said in the speech he prepared for the Jan. 12 inaugural House of Representatives session.

Due to time constraints, Tebuteb and Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) had opted to just submit their speeches to House clerk Linda Muna instead of reading them as the inaugural session was already pushing to 2pm.

Tebuteb said that developing the casino industry shouldn't come at the expense of the island's pristine environment.

"I am deeply concerned that we would once again compromise our natural environment for the sake of developing the casino industry. As contemplated, the upcoming casino will undoubtedly stress our existing infrastructure, particularly our wastewater system. It will also challenge our Commonwealth to wisely prepare our local workforce to meet the labor demands of the casino industry."

Tebuteb added that essential public service systems such as Saipan's education and health-care systems would be called upon to meet the demands of

this new industry.

"We need to deeply and concisely study and prepare for the real impact and demands of the Saipan casino industry, something that we failed to do in the past. Let us learn from our development mistakes of the past and lay out a better development path now and into the future," he said.

'Preserve culture, traditions'

Tebuteb, who will serve as the de facto leader of the minority in the 19th House, said as a lawmaker of Northern Marianas descent who was born and raised on Saipan, he firmly believes that one of his paramount duties is the preservation of the islands' culture and tradition.

"I firmly believe that preservation of our culture and tradition can be accomplished practically within the boundaries of our Covenant with the United States, our Constitution and the United States' Constitution. Without question, I firmly believe that preservation of our culture and tradition can be accomplished without compromising the sustainable development of our beloved Commonwealth, particularly the provisioning and benefits of a 21st century health, education, and economy systems that all Pacific islanders, like people everywhere, want. In fact, I firmly believe that imbedded within our special Commonwealth status, development can be best accomplished only through preservation of our culture and tradition."

In providing for the core constitutional rights of U.S. citizens, Tebuteb said the U.S. Bill of Rights was not intended as a way to undermine and destroy the diverse native cultures of the U.S., most particularly when applied to the CNMI.

"[The] history of development throughout the world consistently shows that pursuing economic development at the expense of the natural environment and in disregard to social

progress is not sustainable in the long term. Development policies, plans, and actions must equally incorporate all three dimensions—economic progress, social progress, and environmental protection."

He said all throughout the CNMI's 30-year history, the government failed to balance its pursuit for progress and protection in all three dimensions. He said there are ample examples of this imbalance that make the average families suffer.

"These include exclusion of our culture and tradition in various institutions, unaffordable cost of utilities; unaffordable cost of health care that is substandard at best; ever-escalating prices of essential commodities such as food for our families and fuel for our transportation," he said.

Tebuteb said these are also reflected in the state of the Saipan Lagoon, which is slowly dying due to sewer seepages and non-source pollution from water runoffs.

"Our failure to balance our pursuit for economic progress with equal pursuit for fiscal integrity and sound governance is clearly illustrated by our seemingly intractable fiscal deficit and

outstanding financial obligations. Indeed, as I speak, our cumulative outstanding financial obligation is in excess of half a billion dollars and increasing daily due to interest charges. We are in a financial crisis at this point. Overall, the CNMI had deeply regressed culturally, economically, socially, environmentally, and fiscally over the last 30 years."

'Liberate this Legislature'

Tebuteb also called upon his colleagues in the 19th Legislature to eschew party politics and work together toward the preservation of the culture and traditions of the Commonwealth.

"Let us do this by enactment of laws that preserve the Bill of Rights as bestowed upon the people of the NMI by our agreement with the United States and our Constitution. I call my colleagues present in this sacred chamber to take meaningful actions that reflect the lessons learned from our past development mistakes. I call upon my colleagues to truthfully acknowledge the urgent call to fix our many problems rationally with genuine collaboration, actionable planning, and hard work. I call upon my colleagues to liberate this legislature of the politics of personal destruction and the quests for personal

power that have for so long created enormous barriers to our development. I call upon my colleagues to transcend political partisanship, to let this 19th Legislature be guided by a vision of enduring development fostered by sound research, analyses and science, and a genuine sense of

urgency throughout all branches of government, particularly this body. I call upon my colleagues to lead the way for balanced development of our culture and tradition, economy, social welfare and environmental protection as engraved in our Constitution," he said.

Call for papers: 3rd Marianas History Conference

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council is announcing a call for papers for the 3rd Marianas History Conference, to be held on Saipan on Sept. 4 to 6.

The conference, which is being organized in conjunction with the University of Guam, Guam Preservation Trust, and Guampedia, would cover a full range of topics associated with the Mariana Archipelago's history with a particular focus on the conference's subtheme, "Milestones in Marianas History."

Papers may be submitted under the following general categories: Ancient History; Early Colonial (17th-18th centuries); Late Colonial (19th-early 20th centuries); World War II; Recent (post-war); and Oral History and Genealogical Research. The organizers also encourage student presentations.

Paper abstracts with a maximum of 150 words and the

presenter's bio may be submitted via <https://guampedia.wufoo.com/forms/marianas-history-conference-iii/>. The deadline for abstracts is April 30, 2015. Conference presenters will be allotted 20 minutes to present with an additional 10 minutes for questions and discussion.

There will be a \$20 fee for early registration, which will begin on July 1, 2015.

Those who register at the event will be charged \$30. Students will be admitted free of charge. You will

be able to pay online through Guampedia or at the Northern Marianas Humanities Council Office, Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai. You will be notified once the online payment option is set up and we will be in touch with more information about the conference soon. Direct conference questions to the Northern Marianas Humanities Council. **(Saipan Tribune)**

» Confab set on Saipan this September



PEPPER FESTIVAL

File photo shows dancers performing at last year's Tinian Hot Pepper Festival. This year's edition of the festival will be held on Feb. 14-15, 2015, on Tinian, Northern Mariana Islands.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NPS: Zipline may have constitutional, other issues

By **JAYSON CAMACHO**
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REPORTER

The zipline project that is being proposed in Marpi may have constitutional and other issues, according to National Park Services' Jim Richardson, superintendent for the Historical Park in Guam and American Memorial Park on Saipan.

In a letter to the Saipan Zoning Office, Richardson said that two constitutional issues are directly applicable to the zipline project.

"First, a land use plan is mandated by Article 11, Section

5 (f) of the CNMI Constitution and Public Law 15-02, Section 105 (f). There is currently no land use plan in place that is required, and approval of a major change in land use without a plan may be in conflict with that article. The NPS will gladly assist the CNMI with participation in a land use plan that would retain the integrity of the NHL, if requested."

"Second, the CNMI Constitution provides in Article 14, Section 3 that: 'Places of importance to the culture, traditions, and history of the people of the NMI shall be protected and preserved... artifacts and other

things of cultural or historical significance shall be protected, preserved and maintained in the Commonwealth as provided by law.' The Marpi Point area certainly meets this constitutional description."

One concern that Richardson also raised is the impact that the zipline project would have on the "many rare, threatened and endangered species that have retreated to this area for living and nesting."

Richardson pointed out that two endangered species, the Nightingale reed warbler and the Mariana swift, and one

threatened species, the Mariana fruit bat, live in Marpi. Richardson also cited six other "rare species" that inhabit Marpi.

Historic site

Most importantly, Richardson said, the Marpi Point area is identified as part of the "Landing Beaches" of As Lito/Isley Field and Marpi Point, which is a Saipan Island National Historic Landmark, designated by the U.S. Department of the Interior secretary back in 1985.

"NPS is delegated the monitoring and technical assistance responsibilities by Congress to

ensure that National Historic Landmarks retain the highest level of integrity. Our responsibilities include review and formal comment on individual proposal that will impact the integrity and character of the Marpi Point area of the historic landmark," Richardson stated.

Aside from being a "landing beach" during World War II, the area is also considered a historic landmark due to the loss of many Japanese civilians and military who committed suicide at the site.

"These aspects of integrity will be significantly impacted by a zipline and associated noisy activity within the boundary and view-shed of the historic

landmark. The area is currently a very significant tourism draw that adds much to the economy of Saipan. If this area is changed from its current character to that of loud commercial amusement, the current tourism draw will be lost," Richardson stated.

He said that NPS recommends locating the project at a more appropriate location that would not negatively impact a historic landmark.

Last Thursday, Zoning board members approved the Saipan Adventure Tours, LLC project for a conditional use application in operating a zipline in Mapit and the company is now working on its other applications with other regulatory agencies.

CUC insists on dismissal of Stevens' discrimination lawsuit

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. insists that it has set forth proper grounds for the dismissal of a discrimination lawsuit filed by its former employee Carlton Stevens against the utility agency.

CUC counsel James S. Sirok said Stevens acknowledges that CUC's motion to dismiss set proper grounds for dismissal but instead seeks to supplement his complaint.

At the outset, Sirok said, it is inappropriate to amend Stevens' complaint with new facts in his opposition to the motion.

The lawyer said Stevens' attempts to add documents as well as facts to the complaint are inappropriate.

Specifically, he said Stevens' characterization of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's "notice of rights to sue" is not totally accurate.

Sirok said the full title of EEOC's notice is "dismissal and notice of rights."

He said this is because it was issued after EEOC determined that "based upon its investigation, the commission is unable to conclude that the information obtained establishes violations of the statutes..."

Sirok said if the complaint is not dismissed with prejudice, Stevens should be required to re-plead new facts.

Sirok said CUC has argued that as a matter of law, an 11-month lapse of time between Stevens' contract ending and his application for a position fails to set forth a cognizable claim of retaliation regarding a withdrawal of a job vacancy announcement on Jan. 21, 2014.

He said Stevens does not respond directly to this argument but argues he gave fair notice of a claim.

"But giving fair notice is not enough if there is no causations as a matter of law because there was an 11-month break," he added.

Stevens has asked the federal court to deny CUC's motion to dismiss his discrimination lawsuit.

Stevens, through counsel Pamela Brown Blackburn, also requested the court to give him an opportunity to amend his complaint if the court finds defects in his first amended complaint.

Blackburn argued that Stevens' complaint satisfies federal rules of procedure because it identifies claims for which relief can be granted.

In CUC's motion to dismiss the amended complaint, Sirok, asserted that lawsuit fails to properly allege subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure because jurisdictional requirements have not been satisfied.

Sirok argued that to bring a Title VII of the Civil Rights Act claim, plaintiff is required to exhaust administrative remedies by filing a claim with the EEOC.

Stevens, an African-American, sued CUC and its four officials for allegedly not renewing his contract as direct responsible charge operator in CUC's wastewater division, providing him a used and inoperable computer, and not providing him an office space, among other complaints.

Stevens is demanding unspecified compensatory damages, courts costs, and attorney's fees.

Last month, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona dismissed Stevens' claims against CUC, executive director Alan Fletcher, human resources director Frank Cepeda, wastewater manager Richard Wasser, and water and wastewater manager Paul Raczowski, for lack of subject matter jurisdiction.

Manglona dismissed with prejudice all of Stevens' claims against Fletcher, Cepeda, Wasser, and Raczowski, and dismissed without prejudice his complaint against CUC.

Dismissed with prejudice means Stevens can't re-open the claims anymore. Dismissed without prejudice means the plaintiff can re-file the claims in the future.

Manglona gave Stevens 14 days from the date of the order to file a second amended complaint.

Stevens subsequently filed the second amended complaint. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

Large drop in toxic chemicals released in NMI in 2013

By **DENNIS B. CHAN**
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REPORTER

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a reported a decrease in the amount of toxic chemicals released in the CNMI in 2013.

According to its annual Toxic Release Inventory released last week, 15,370 lbs of toxic chemicals were released in the NMI in 2013, about a 64,000-lb decrease from the amount released in 2012.

The NMI had the second least amount of total releases per square mile out of 56 states and territories nationwide.

The NMI had 79,469 lbs of on- and off-site releases in 2012, according to the EPA report.

The agency defines a "release" of a chemical as one that is emitted to the air or water, placed in some type of land disposal, or transferred off-site for disposal or release.

No off-site releases were reported for both years.

In 2013, chemicals released into the air totaled 15,256 lbs, compared to 67,994 lbs in 2012. Sulfuric acid comprised 73 percent of this amount. The year before, the acid made up 89 percent of this.

In 2013, chemicals released to land amounted to 102 lbs, compared to 96 lbs in 2012. A total of 26 lbs were underground injections, compared to 46 lbs the year before.

The rest of the releases were into landfills, surface impoundments, or what was labeled as "other."

For water, chemicals released amounted to 12 lbs, compared to 340 lbs the year before.

For 2013, chemicals released into the air, land, and water include sulfuric acid, polycyclic aromatic compounds, toluene, xylene (mixed isomers), zinc compounds, naphthalene, ethylbenzene, and mercury, among others.

Eight facilities in the CNMI reported some release. The top

three were the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Marianas Acquisition Corp., and Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc.

CUC's Industry Sector 2211 - Electrical Utilities was highlighted as the largest contributor to on-site releases, at 12,440 lbs in 2013.

The same sector released 65,123 lbs of on-site chemicals in 2012.

For both years, the facility did not report pollution prevention activity during year, according to the agency's factsheet.

The 79,469 lbs of toxic chemical releases in 2012 was an increase over 2011's 3,224 lbs, mainly due to four new facilities reporting TRI data, according to EPA.

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CHCC to further improve technology systems this year

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

After working on shortening the wait time for medical records and billings last year, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is now focused on improving its technology systems this year, according to chief executive officer Esther Muña.

Throughout fiscal year 2014, CHCC's Corporate Health Information Technology department made numerous improvements on how health information is utilized throughout the health care system in the CNMI, specifically the Electronic Health Record system.

EHR helps the hospital by making medical information readily available and secure for authorized users at the hospital.

It is now being utilized in the Kagman Community Health Center, the hospital's inpatient wards, outpatient clinics, laboratory department, pharmacy department, and the emergency department.

Muña said that CHCC will look into further improving its technology systems this year.

Both the Tinian and Rota Health Centers have yet to have their EHR fully imple-

mented but that is now being worked on.

"Tinian and Rota will subsequently have EHR-live early calendar year 2015," Muña said.

Last year, from late July to early August, CHCC collaborated with the University of Hawaii to do a test run on Tinian and Rota to determine the strength of the network capabilities. The found an issue in the "strength and viability of the Internet connection."

"Tinian and Rota were included in the plans for EHR implementation but with a priority to meet 'meaningful use' stage 2 for the hospital, it was necessary to prioritize the Commonwealth Health Center and especially since 'meaningful use' incentive payment assists in the funding of EHR implementation for Tinian and Rota," Muña said.

Established by the Centers for Medicaid and Medical Services, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 authorized CMS to provide financial incentives to eligible professionals and hospitals that demonstrate "meaningful use" of certified EHR technology under two programs: the Medicare Incentive program or the Medicaid incentive program.

This allowed CHC to participate in the incentive program by ensuring health quality and patient safety of the EHR systems through phases and receive payment assistance.

EHR was implemented in phases, with the first phase focusing on implementing documentation such as vital signs, nursing and physician notes, and medication administration records, among others. This was done in November 2013.

In 2013, CHC got \$1.4 million as an incentive after it demonstrated "meaningful use" of the EHR system and became the first in the Pacific territories to implement EHR and receive incentives under the program.

The second phase focused on transitioning the laboratory department away from the previous system it once used and the third phase focused on implementing computerized physician order entry for medication, laboratory, admission and discharge instructions.

Other advancements

The EHR system's implementation opened doors to other improvements, Muña said.

"CHCC providers enrolled in the Medicaid EHR incentive

program and received \$128,000 in incentives specifically for eligible providers. In addition, electronic data interchange testing was completed to facilitate electronic billing for accepting payers," Muña said.

"This was huge as prior to electronic billing, claims were submitted by paper or online after already entering billing and demographic information in the resource patient management system computer program...it created redundancy and delayed payment...However, Aetna Insurance and Medicare has completed testing and is currently in production while Staywell Insurance is awaiting production," she added.

One other project includes archiving through a technological system called Laserfische. While EHR is implemented, older medical records may still need to be accessible to the provider and also protected.

"It is still ongoing and once completed, digitized documents and procedures in the Human Resources department and Finance and Accounting departments will provide a more efficient process throughout the administrative programs," Muna said.

MILITARY

From Page 1

cies be listed as threatened and the rest as endangered.

One plant species—the *Heritiera longipetiolata*—described by Fish and Wildlife as some of "rarest of rare," occurs on lands leased to the military on Tinian.

In its October report, the Service wrote that the development of two-thirds of Tinian land leased to the U.S. Department of Defense would "negatively impact the habitat" of these plant species.

Live-fire training on the island would also negatively impact the species, they wrote. Pagan, another proposed site for live-fire training, was taken into account as well.

Citing a report by the NavFac Engineering Command in 2014, the Service said that "Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 claim the entire island [of Pagan] as a live-fire training area."

"If the entire island of Pagan is used as a live-fire training range area, it would negatively impact" the *Cycas micronesica*, Slevin's skink, humped tree snail, and habitat for *Bulbophyllum guamense*," stated the Service.

These species would be negatively impacted by "direct destruction by live-fire weapons or possible wildfires caused by them and by trampling and destruction of military personnel," according to the agency.

Further south, in Guam, 18 of the 23 species occur on preferred alternative sites for the military relocation of personnel there.

As of Dec. 1, 2014, the Service counted 12 comments submitted since their proposed action was listed on the *Federal*

Register on Oct. 1 and public comments opened.

Three of these comments are available online. One notably came from the Department of Navy's deputy assistant secretary Donald R. Schregardus.

"Most of the 23 species proposed for listing occur on military property," he wrote. "As you are aware the DON has a number of actions proposed in the Marianas that are critically important national defense initiatives. We look forward to working with your office to finalize the Joint Region Marianas Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan so that management strategies can be implemented to protect these proposed species, to avoid military readiness impact and to facilitate required ESA consultations," he wrote.

In its October report, under a section labeled "Historical and Ongoing Human Impacts," the Service briefly described a history of colonial use from Spanish, to German, to Japanese times, that caused "degradation" and alteration of the islands of Rota, Saipan and Tinian, "leaving little native forest" for the present day.

Whether the military will continue this narrative remains to be seen.

Earlier, MARFORPAC executive director Craig Whelden indicated that the environment impact statement for live-fire training in the region had been pushed back to take into consideration further concerns.

Pagan, he also indicated, would use a training area limited to its northern volcano to protect flora and fauna in the south.

The draft environmental impact statement is reportedly due in April.

Kiribati's human rights record to be reviewed by UN

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—Kiribati's human rights record is to be reviewed by the UN Human Rights Council on Monday.

It is one of 14 states that will be looked at by the Universal Periodic Review as part of an ongoing review of all members.

The UN Human Rights Of-

ficer in the Pacific Regional Office, Satya Jennings, says Kiribati first took part in the process in 2010.

Jennings says that initial review highlighted a number of issues.

"High levels of violence against women, criminalization of homosexuality, the pending ratification of core human rights treaties and the need to establish a national human rights institu-

tion. These concerns were addressed through recommendations."

Jennings says Monday's review will focus on implementation of those recommendations.

The Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru and Australia are scheduled to be reviewed in October.

» Ongoing review of all member states, initial scrutiny notes issues

MISSING

From Page 1

Public Safety has yet to release information to the media about Li's disappearance.

In a huge vehicular convoy, over a hundred Chinese businessmen, farmers, and other workers conducted an island-wide search for Li since Saturday afternoon until yesterday. They were the same ones who searched last November for the then-missing two farmers and held a protest rally over the police's failure to solve murder cases involving Chinese nationals.

Several Chinese nationals, including Li's relative, told *Saipan Tribune* that Li was last seen inside his car outside Saipan Fresh Market on Saturday afternoon.

When Li did not return and did not answer his cellphone, family members and friends started searching for him late Saturday afternoon until late at night and reported the matter to the Department of Public Safety.

One of the searchers told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that police found Li's white Toyota Tacoma truck with license plate

ACP-898 abandoned at a small road leading to a beach located between Obyan Beach and Ladder Beach.

The searcher, who requested anonymity, said he did not notice any visible damage or bloodstains outside the vehicle.

The searcher said after they learned that Li went missing on Saturday afternoon, they joined together and searched Garapan and its environs until Saturday night.

He said they resumed their search on Sunday morning and, after learning that police had found the car near Obyan Beach, they shifted their search to Obyan Beach, Ladder Beach, As Lito, As Gonno, Kagman and even in Marpi.

The searcher said he heard that family members dialed Li's cell phone number and the phone at first was ringing, but no one answered. Later, when a family member dialed the phone again, it was already off, he said.

Li's daughters, ages 13 and 23, are here on Saipan.

Li is already separated from his wife, who stays in China, a family member said.

The daughters were taken to the FBI office yesterday as the FBI is assisting the police

in the investigation, according to a businesswoman who accompanied Li's relative during the search.

Family members opened Fresh Market for a few hours only since Sunday. They posted Li's photo in front of the store.

The photo has captions in English and Chinese languages that seek the public's help for information on Li's whereabouts. It contains few details about Li as well as the phone number to be called for information.

A waiter said Li's store has been doing good business as it earns \$5,000 monthly for supplying their restaurant with vegetables and fruits. The store started as a small business and expanded in the last year or two.

Li's daughters are usually seen helping in the store.

A Chinese businesswoman said they will offer \$10,000 cash to anyone who has information that will lead to finding Li. It's the same businesswoman who also stated last month that she was willing to put up a \$10,000 cash reward to anyone who can provide information that will solve the killing of farmers Hai Ren Li and Cheng You Li.

Hai Ren Li and Cheng You Li were last seen in the afternoon of Oct. 31 when they left

their respective homes in As Lito and San Antonio to work at their farm in As Gonno between 12pm and 2:30pm.

On Nov. 1, part of a large group of Chinese community that helped in the search found Hai Ren Li's Toyota Tacoma that was abandoned under some *tangan-tangan* trees a few steps from the side of Magisa Drive in As Gonno.

Last Feb. 23, the bodies of Guo Huang Xu and his wife, Qing Xiu Zheng, both farmers, were found charred in their house that was burned to the ground. Police classified the case as a double homicide.

On Dec. 8, 2012, couple Jun Li Yang and Jing Liu were found murdered inside their home in San Vicente. Jing Liu was president, treasurer and secretary of a company that was planning to put up a recycling center and apartment rental business.

In March 1995, Zhao Ming Hou and his wife, Yu Hua Huang, who were then owners of Ming-Hua Market in Dan-dan, were found dead in separate areas in Kagman 3. Prior to the discovery of their bodies, their store was burglarized.

All these double homicides involving Chinese nationals remain unsolved.

MARKET

From Page 1

On Friday, they open a 10am and close at 6pm. The market will also operate during Saturdays, from 1pm to 6pm.

These new hours have extended operations by a handful of hours and into the weekend. They previously closed at 3pm, according to Cabrera.

"We can pay the workers longer hours," he said, describing it as "good news."

"Everything will be changing in the coming future," he added.

As for the turnout of produce to fill the market, he said this is "looking good."

"This month, next month, there will be a lot of produce—all the way 'til June there will be a lot of produce coming in," he said.

But he added that they still "need members to support the market."

"Once you buy a share, you are a part-owner of the market," he added.

The market will also finally have its own landline number. Cabrera said the landline has been installed already, and they are just waiting for the applica-

tion to go through IT&E.

He said they expect to have the line activated "either today or tomorrow."

Other things they are planning to purchase with the \$60,000 are seeds, fertilizers, and other things that their farmers need, he said.

"A lot of times, when Ace [Hardware] or a seed supplier runs out of good seeds—sometimes farmers order their own seeds directly from the company—but it's more convenient when you have it directly on the island," he said.

He added that fresh fish like tilapia, which are in big demand, are "in the plans already."

"The more we have, the more customers will be attracted," he said.

The Garapan Public Market opened in August, funded through a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Since then they have fallen through hard times, operating on a deficit, reportedly due to lack of produce to sell during bad weather, among other things.

The co-op asked for the new funds from the local delegation in September.

Then-president of Saipan company arrested in China

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A then-president of a company that operates a store and restaurant on Saipan was arrested in China in 2013 for embezzlement and theft, among other charges, according to attorney Samuel Mok.

Now the company, Universal Group Development Inc. (Saipan), is suing its former president and shareholder, Wanzhong Yu, for conversion and the First Hawaiian Bank for breach of contract.

Universal Group, through counsel Mok, alleged that Yu and First Hawaiian Bank caused the company to be unable to access \$225,000 of its own funds from a business savings account.

Universal Group asked the Superior Court to issue a declaration that the company is the lawful owner of the funds contained in the business savings account. Universal Group also asked the court to order the bank to allow the company immediate access to the account.

The company also wants the court to stop the bank from allowing Yu access to the account.

The plaintiff is demanding unspecified damages, interests, court costs, and attorney's fees.

Universal Group operates the Hailan Market and Oriental Dumpling Restaurant on Saipan.

According to Mok in the complaint, Universal Group held a "maximize savings" business account with First Ha-

waiian Bank under an account that as of Oct. 17, 2014 had a balance of \$224,558.71.

From 1995 to 2007, Yu was an officer and shareholder of Universal Group. In 1997, he became president and continued in that capacity until 2007.

Mok said that, in 2007, Yu resigned as president but continued to act as one against the wishes of the company's shareholders and directors who were mostly situated in China.

From 2007 to the present, Mok said, Yu refused to allow access to the books and records of the company to the directors and failed to distribute any dividends or profits to the shareholders.

He said Yu operated Universal Group without lawful corporate authority and kept all the profits of the company for himself.

Mok disclosed that when Yu traveled to China in November 2013, Chinese law enforcement authorities arrested him and brought him before a Chinese court to answer the criminal charges such as embezzlement and theft, among others.

At that juncture, Mok said, Yu agreed to resign—again—as president of Universal Group and transferred his shares in the company to another officer of the corporation.

Unknown to the company, however, Yu allegedly wrote a letter to First Hawaiian Bank requesting that the business savings account be frozen so that one else other than himself

could access the funds.

On Nov. 17, 2014, Universal Group, through its vice president and secretary Mingnan Jin, attempted to wire transfer money from the business savings account to the business bank account belonging to Universal Group's corporate parent located in China.

Mok said Jin was an authorized signatory to the business savings account but First Hawaiian Bank refused to effectuate the wire transfer as requested.

Initially, Mok said, the bank told Jin that the wire transfer could not be executed because it purportedly needed to be au-

thorized by the branch manager who was not allegedly present in the bank at that time.

The next day, Jin returned to the bank to follow up on his wire transfer request but was told by the branch manager that he needed to bring additional documents with him showing that he was authorized to act on Universal Group's behalf.

The next day, Jin returned to the bank for the third day in a row with the documents requested by the branch manager.

At this point, Mok said, without even looking at the documents, the bank's branch man-

ager stated that she needed to get approval from the general manager in Guam.

The next day, Jin returned to the bank and the branch manager told him that the wire transfer would not be executed.

According to the bank, Mok said, the plaintiff's former president, Yu, had written an unspecified "letter" requesting that the bank to "freeze" the business savings account at issue.

Mok said this "letter" was never shown to the company despite numerous demands.

On Nov. 28, 2014, Universal Group forwarded a letter though its attorney to the bank requesting that the company be given access to the bank account.

In support of the request, the company annexed numerous

corporate documents showing that Jin was the bona fide officer of the corporation and authorized to conduct banking transactions.

By letter dated Dec. 22, 2014, the bank indicated it was authorized to freeze the account due to a "dispute" over its ownership pursuant to the bank's deposit rules and regulations.

Mok alleged that it does not appear that the bank has taken any concrete, good faith steps to resolve the dispute at issue, including any semblance of an investigation.

To date, the lawyer said, the bank has refused to allow Universal Group access to its own bank account solely on the unsubstantiated and undisclosed request of Yu.

» **Ex-president allegedly caused to freeze \$225,000 in bank account**

Bill to assess 1-time wharfage fee prefiled

Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian) has prefiled a bill that will limit the wharfage fees charged by the Commonwealth Ports Authority to cargo offloaded at a port or harbor in the Commonwealth and to waive wharfage fees on cargo shipped to and from the islands within the Commonwealth.

Senate 19-01, which was prefiled last Jan. 13, wants to ensure that wharfage fees are charged one time for commodities that are off-loaded at any port or harbor under the CPA's jurisdiction.

"The same commodities shall not be assessed wharfage a second time regardless whether the same cargo is shipped from Saipan to Rota or Tinian on a different vessel. In addition, this act provides that no wharfage fees shall be assessed on cargo shipped to and from any Commonwealth port or harbor," reads Cruz's bill.

The bill's "findings" section determined that the high cost of commodities on Rota and Tinian is a great burden to the consumers and a portion of the added cost is due to the wharfage fees imposed by CPA on

commodities shipped from Saipan to Rota and Tinian.

Under the bill, wharfage fees shall be limited to all cargo including liquid petroleum products shipped from outside the Commonwealth and offloaded at the Port of Saipan, Rota West Harbor, or Tinian Harbor. Provided, however, that no additional wharfage fees shall be assessed on the same cargo when shipped, regardless of the vessel, from any port or harbor under the CPA jurisdiction and subsequently shipped to its final destination at any other port or harbor in the Commonwealth.

SB 19-01 also states that no wharfage fees shall be charged on all cargo including liquid petroleum products shipped to and from Saipan, Rota West Harbor, or Tinian Harbor.

The bill for a one-time assessment of wharfage fees comes after Rota recorded the most dramatic increase in consumer price index Commonwealth-wide in the fourth quarter of 2013 as it rose from 109.9 from July to September 2013 to 110.3 from October to December 2013. (Mark Rabago)

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1st batch of students may receive SHEFA checks early

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance has already submitted to the Department of Finance its check request for the first batch of students who will receive financial aid under

the program. Students who were approved and have submitted all documents required by SHEFA might see an early distribution of checks this semester. According to SHEFA administrator Merissa S. Rasa, the first check request was submitted to

Finance on Monday, adding that SHEFA board chair Josephine Sablan was present at the time the first check request was submitted. Rasa also reported that out of the 1,038 valid applicants as of Thursday, 130 applicants were approved and have turned in all supporting documents while 16

were denied due to the lack of requirements. Rasa noted that of the 1,038 applicants, 651 are on-island and 387 are off island students. “As of today [Jan. 15] we still have 892 incomplete applications. Out of the 1,038 valid applications, 33 of them

are from the Northern Marianas Trade Institute and only two have submitted all documents,” Rasa said. In related news, Rasa noted that SHEFA’s draft annual report will be out by Jan. 31. She told board members that she will be giving them the report on Jan. 23 through email for input. SHEFA’s website will also improved by having a new tab section to include job vacancy announcements that

include JVAs from the Office of Personnel Management, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Workforce Investment Agency, Public School System, Northern Marianas College, Saipan Chamber of Commerce and other government agencies. For more information, call 233-5995 or visit SHEFA at their office in Garapan at the backside of Garapan Elementary School.



MOVING FORCE BEHIND PCF

The Pacific Century Fellows Marianas Chapter Inaugural Class of 2014 extended their sincere appreciation to the board of directors and sponsors for their “tireless support and for making this year’s program a great success” during a ceremony at Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan. In the photo, from left to right, are PCF Marianas Chapter vice chair Maggie Sablan, PCF Marianas Chapter chair Jerry Tan, PCF founder Mufi Hannemann, and fellows Jacqueline Che and Alfreda Camacho.

DENNIS B. CHAN

Bill mandating cooperation between outgoing mayor, mayor-elect prefiled

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Freshman Sen. Teresita A. Santos (R-Rota) wants the Legislature to pass a law that would mandate the cooperation and collaboration between the outgoing mayor and the mayor-elect during transition periods. Senate Bill 19-02 seeks to provide “a healthy closure with the outgoing mayor, provide a sufficient timeframe to review and plan closed and ongoing projects beginning two weeks after certification from the Commonwealth Election Commission, and to assure a successful transition in mayoral leadership.” Santos said she has prefiled SB 19-02 after the Legislature

found that there are currently no provisions or procedures for a successful transition for a mayor-elect into office. “Due to the voluminous data acquired throughout the mayoral term of office, it is imperative that the outgoing mayor work collaboratively with the mayor-elect in order to efficiently continue providing public service to the community,” reads the senator’s prefiled bill. Santos’ bill wants to amend Title 1, Division 6, Part 2 of the Commonwealth Code by adding a Chapter 3 entitled “Mayoral Transition Act of 2015.” The new chapter establishes the Office of the Mayor-elect, which is created on the date upon which the CNMI Board of Elections certifies the election result of a mayor who does not succeed in office.

Mayoral Transition Act of 2015 said the Office of the Mayor-elect should be staffed by such temporary employees as appointed by the mayor-elect. The office shall also work with the incumbent mayor and his/her officials and/or Cabinet members to provide for the orderly transfer of power.

“The incumbent mayor and his officials shall cooperate with the office of the mayor-elect to the maximum extent practical,” the bill reads.


To further cooperation, the bill states that the head of each department, office, gaming commission—excluding the Commonwealth Lottery Commission—instrumentality, or other entity of the Office of the Mayor shall upon request make available all files and records, except personnel working files, any confidential files of persons appointed by the mayor, and any files, such as tax records, to which access is prohibited by law.

The bill also calls for the outgoing mayor to make “available sufficient staff to carry out these duties within a reasonable time period to serve as liaison to the office of the mayor-elect; provided, that the mayor-elect or a designee may request that specific individuals be assigned for this purpose, but that the final decision regarding the assignment shall rest with the head of the entity.”


Saipan student makes Dean’s List at NY university

NEW PALTZ, NY—The State University of New York at New Paltz is proud to congratulate Xiao Mei Su (Digital Media Program and Management), a resident of Saipan, for being named to

the fall 2014 Dean’s List. Dean’s List designation is reserved for students who excel academically and earn at least a 3.3 grade-point average in a semester with a full-time course load. (PR)



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd floor-Oleai Joeten Commercial Center
Saipan, MP 96950



INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW/FHWA-15-IFB-003

CROSS ISLAND ROAD AND DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS,
PROJECT NO. CM-NH-0031(016), ROUTE 31 PHASE III, SAIPAN

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Cross Island Road and Drainage Improvements, Route 31 Phase III, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after **January 6, 2015** at Pacific Quick Print & Post, located in Middle Road, Garapan, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of state price to Pacific Quick Print & Post, is required to defray the cost of printing the package.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **February 6, 2015**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **March 10, 2015** to **Mr. Vicente C. Cabrera, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with all prospective bidders.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matters relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 pm to **Mr. Vicente C. Cabrera, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid. The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if issued after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who obtained the invitation for bids from the Technical Services Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgment of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in the space provided. **It shall be the prospective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the COTR at (670) 234-9828/9838 no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening.**

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW/FHWA-15-IFB-003"**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time **March 20, 2015**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time **March 20, 2015**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **March 20, 2015** and the bid documents must be received at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base Drive, Saipan no later than **April 1, 2015**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, **April 6, 2015**. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:30 a.m. local time, on **March 20, 2015**.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. **Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashiers check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.** Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations §70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than \$25,000.00. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI. and
b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceed the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:


1) Cash
2) US Gov't Securities
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is **Three Hundred Thirty (330) working days** upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages for delays beyond the established completion date will be assessed according to Table 108-1 of the standard Specification for Construction of Roads and Bridges on Federal Highway Projects, FP403

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ MARTIN C. SABLAN
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director of Procurement and Supply



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Hold Public Information Meetings and Hearings on the Proposal to Protect 23 Species in Guam and the CNMI

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced on January 12, 2015 that it will reopen the public comment period for an additional 30-days on the proposed rule to protect 23 species in Guam and the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The Service will hold two public hearings and four public information meetings during this time. These meetings and hearings will allow all interested parties additional time and opportunity to comment on the proposed rule.

The information meetings and public hearings will be held at:

University of Guam
Leon Guerrero School of Business and Public Administration Building
Anthony Leon Guerrero Multi-Purpose Room 129
UOG Station
Mangilao, Guam 96923
Times: 5-6 pm public meeting/ 6-8 pm public hearing
Date: January 27, 2015

Multi-Purpose Center (Saipan)
Beach Road
Susupe, Saipan
Times: 5-6 pm public meeting/ 6-8 pm public hearing
Date: January 28, 2015

In addition, the Service will hold additional 2-hour information meetings at:

Sinapalo Elementary School Cafeteria (Rota)
Sinapalo I
Songsong Village, Rota, MP 96951
Times: 6-8 pm public meeting
Date: January 29, 2015

Tinian Elementary School Cafeteria
San Jose Village, Tinian, MP 96952
Times: 9-11 am public meeting
Date: January 31, 2015

For More Information contact Ken Foote at 808/792-9535

Hospital sees growth, stability in clinical staffing

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has finally earned a reputation of being a suitable employer of primary and midlevel providers, according to CHCC chief executive officer Esther Muña.

CHCC's vow to recruit and retain adequate and quality staffing has been maintained over the years since it first started in 2011.

"It was evident with the full staffing of primary care physi-

cians and midlevel providers at Commonwealth Health Center. As a Medicare-certified primary care facility, CHC hospital assured the community of its obligation to provide primary care specialties of internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics-gynecology, and general practice for its hospital services," Muña said.

For primary care services, the hospital provided 60,000 outpatient services and consistently provided inpatient care services at 90 percent or at higher capacity in 2014.

CHCC now has seven internal medicine physicians, allowing the hospital to reopen the internal medicine clinic.

CHCC's pediatricians have also increased from three to six.

"This increase allowed for the pediatricians to extend their service at the Rota and Tinian Health Centers and the Kagan Community Health Center," Muña said.

CHCC also has a fully staffed surgery department.

According to Muña, CHCC also hired more pharmacists and

respiratory therapists to ensure the availability of services at the hospital, including a laboratory director/pathologist. The laboratory director is responsible for maintaining CHCC's laboratory conditions and its certification.

"As a primary care hospital, we had successfully filled all provider vacancies, meeting primary care needs. As a Medicare-certified dialysis facility, we also have the only nephrologist in the CNMI," Muña said.

Muña said that having the reputation of being a suitable

employer for providers is a significant milestone for the corporation because it goes in line with the standards that they are striving for their patients—the same standards required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

"CMS regulations state that the medical staff is accountable for the quality of care provided to patients and that the governing body must 'ensure the criteria for selection based on' individual character, competence, training, experience and judgment," Muña said.

"Regulations further state that 'under no circumstances that professional privileges in the hospital are dependent solely upon certification, fellowship or membership in a specialty body or society.' So even if they are board-certified or they are members of a specialty body, CHCC must vet physicians based on the criteria before granting them privileges to practice at our facility," she added.

Muña said that following regulations is necessary because "this is the standard that CHCC must maintain for all our patients" and they cannot put even one patient at risk by deviating from that standard.

GPS trackers could help ease Guam prison overcrowding

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—The Judiciary of Guam is hoping to test a program that would put GPS tracking on a handful of pretrial detainees.

If successful, it could be one way to ease the ever-growing population at the Department of Corrections.

In a recent report, the Office of Public Accountability attributed overpopulation to the high number of pretrial detainees who are confined awaiting their day in court.

The report suggested that alternatives to confinement could be a significant step in reducing the strain of overpopulation.

One possible alternative is GPS monitoring.

Chief Probation Officer John Lizama said the courts will be partnering with G4S security to pilot the monitoring program for one month.

The Judiciary's probation office is expected to identify 10 possible candidates who are pretrial detainees and could be a good fit for the pilot program.

Those defendants will be chosen based on how "low-risk" they are.

Lizama said they could include, for example, first-time offenders who are already employed.

Those candidates would be presented to judges who would have the final say on whether they can participate in the program.

"And we would pilot them for a month and see the results of the GPS tracking," Lizama said.

'90s pager program

This isn't the first time the courts have tried electronic monitoring, Lizama said.

In the '90s, the courts received a grant to establish a monitoring program specifically for family violence offenders on house arrest.

In that program, a device was attached to the client and another device was plugged into a landline telephone.

Lizama said probation officers could set a maximum range, such as 20 feet, that would be determined by the home and case circumstances.

If the person went beyond that range, it would send a page to the probation officer and a fax to the office.

However, he noted, there was no GPS component. So although probation officers would be notified that the client had left the range, officers wouldn't have much information beyond that.

At the time, he said, the program cost about \$10 per day per

defendant.

That program lasted for about four or five years.

"And unfortunately we ran out of grants, so we didn't have funding locally to outright purchase those units," Lizama said.

About two years ago, the courts tried piloting a monitoring program with G4S, but the costs were too high to even pilot the program.

Lizama said the program would have cost more than \$25 a day back then.

"And moving from \$10 a day to \$25 a day, we found that we wouldn't have any defendants that could afford to use the electronic monitor," he said.

Technology challenge

Joshua Tenorio, acting administrator of the courts, said he couldn't say yet exactly how much the program would cost this time but it would hopefully be more feasible.

He said the courts are hopeful they could launch the pilot program within the coming weeks.

The pilot program is a big test for G4S, Tenorio said.

"Our interest is to see if there is technology that can adequately cover the span of the island," he said.

A tracking program would need to be able to accurately re-

port the whereabouts of all defendants in the program at all times.

"If they can show us that they can do that, ... that might broaden the number of detainees that could be served," he said.

The electronic monitoring wouldn't replace the physical monitoring conducted by probation officers.

Probation officers, said Lizama, would still be monitoring and supervising clients to ensure they're abiding by release conditions.

"So the compliance as far as some of the conditions like 'no alcohol,' 'no firearms,' the probation officer would still go out and do it," said Lizama. "The electronic monitoring is just basically to assist.

Parole, early release

Right now, the pilot program would only involve pretrial defendants because that is where the courts have jurisdiction.

But if it's successful, it could expand to include DOC inmates eligible for parole or early release.

"Certainly using electronic monitoring for a (pre-parole) program at DOC is an option as far as reducing the inmate population at the Department of Corrections," Lizama said.

Tenorio said the courts

might reach out to the Office of the Attorney General to talk about the program.

After all, he said, as a judge, recently elected Attorney General Elizabeth Barrett-Anderson oversaw the family violence docket at the time of the first

monitoring program.

"And, quite frankly, she is one of the judges that, when she was a judge here, she's been at the center of many of the programs that have been created to solve problems," he said.

Though the courts haven't approached her office yet about the pilot program, Tenorio said he expects the Office of the Attorney

General will be involved in talks.

"One of the advantages she's going to have as attorney general is she understands what's going on inside the courtroom," said Tenorio.

"I expect that the kind of things we'll be able to address and discuss are gonna be big issues that we'll be able to conquer," he added.



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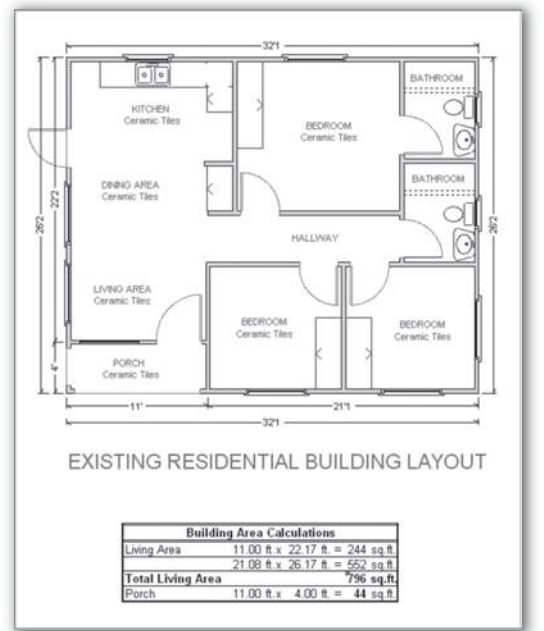


The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC), as auctioneer and seller, hereby gives notice that all the rights, title and interests of NMHC in and to the following described real property will be sold at auction:

LOT NO.:	011 G 1155	HASGNOT DR., CORNER LEMMAI WAY,
MINIMUM BID :	\$49,100.00	KAGMAN III

The auction will be open to the general public and will be held at NMHC's conference room, Garapan, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 22, 2015 subject to the following terms and conditions:

- Minimum Bid. The minimum acceptable bid for this property shall be \$49,100.00.
- Reserve. The auction sale shall be held with reserve.
- Rights and Duties of NMHC as Auctioneer. Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable law of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, NMHC shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction sale:
 - To withdraw any property listed for sale in this announcement before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted.
 - To adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is struck off, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and
 - To reject any and all bids.
- Bids. Tentative bids may be submitted in advance for this property listed in this notice. Such bids shall not be binding, except that the highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the item. Bids may be entered in person, in writing, or by telephone to Mr. Jesse S. Palacios, Corporate Director, NMHC, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950; Telephone: 234-6866; Facsimile: 234-9021; or to Law Office of F. Matthew Smith, P.O. Box 501127, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 234-7455, Fax: 234-7256.
- Deposit; Payment. A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale by cash, cashier's check or credit card (Visa or Mastercard). The remaining balance will be due within three (3) calendar days of the auction sale. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within three (3) calendar days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the aforementioned property will automatically revert to NMHC.
- Change of Terms. NMHC reserves the right to change any of the terms of conduct and enforcement of sale by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause, shall be binding on any buyer by constructive notice.
- Inspection and No Warranty. Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property. The interests of NMHC in the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty. Failure to inspect the real property or any related documents will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.



RESIDENTIAL, GOVERNMENT & BUSINESS DISCONNECTION NOTICE

IT&E would like to remind its **RESIDENTIAL, GOVERNMENT & BUSINESS** customers that current billing of accounts are due on or before **Wednesday, January 21**. Payments not received by close of business on **January 21** will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00PM on that day.

To prevent temporary suspension, customers are hereby advised to kindly pay their bills on or before **Wednesday, January 21**. Disputed billings must be brought to IT&E's attention in person or in writing by **Wednesday, January 21**. Customers must pay any current amount due, to avoid disconnection.

If you have questions regarding billing or services please call Customer Service at 682-4ITE (4483) or visit our Customer Service or Business Sales Center – Middle Road, Chalan Laolao.



To avoid disconnection you may pay your IT&E bill at any location below:

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TSL Plaza – up to 6:00pm
Online payment – up to 9:00pm
PAY BY PHONE – 682-4ITE (4483)

Dated this 17th day of December, 2014.

/S/Jesse S. Palacios, Corporate Director
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation

A. Samoa gov seeks government-owned charter bank

By FILI SAGAPOLUTELE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (AP)—American Samoa's governor is trying to open a government-owned bank for the territory.

Gov. Lolo Matalasi Moliga earlier this week submitted legislation that would allow the government to set up the charter bank, named Territorial Bank of American Samoa. It would be controlled and operated under a new territorial government holding entity

called Territorial Bankcorp.

He's targeting June for its opening.

This comes as Bank of Hawaii plans to close down its American Samoa operations and as ANZ Amerika Samoa Bank has reduced banking services.

Bank of Hawaii first announced in 2012 plans to close down its two American Samoa branches. But when Moliga took office in January the following year, he convinced the bank to remain in the territory until a second

bank opens in Pago Pago. Bank of Hawaii closed one branch in 2013.

While ANZ Amerika Samoa Bank hasn't signaled a desire to leave, it reduced its available lending products and is not otherwise able to deliver full banking services that should be expected in a U.S. territory, the governor said.

ANZ Amerika Samoa Bank, overseen by ANZ Guam, Inc.,

is the local subsidiary of the Australia New Zealand Banking Group.

The territory has suffered from "poor quality service," from the commercial banks, the governor said in a letter to lawmakers.

However, the chairman of the territorial House of Representatives Committee on Commerce said he won't schedule any hearings on the bill until re-

ceiving certain financial reports from the governor, including a five-year financial statement on the projected revenues and expenditures for the bank. Rep. Larry Sanitoa said he's also requesting an analysis of pros and cons of the measure.

The governor said the charter bank is modeled after the Bank of North Dakota, a state-owned bank originally chartered in 1919.

Establishing the charter bank is "an ambitious effort but one we cannot afford to let pass us by if we want to build a more satisfactory, long-term future for our people," he said. "Without a bank willing to invest in the territory and provide the same level of banking services existing across other states and territories, it will be difficult for us to move forward."

Group's 1st cleanup for 2015 nets 1,520 lbs of trash

Paseo de Marianas Promoters Inc. kicked off Saturday its first monthly cleanup for this year, collecting about 1,520 lbs of trash.

Twenty-five members of the Saipan Awaodori Team, two Kagman High School students,

one Northern Marianas College student, and eight Kinpachi Restaurant staff cleaned up the Paseo de Marianas and its surroundings.

"Despite the rain we did our first cleanup for 2015 and collected over 1,500 lbs of trash,"

PDM Promoters coordinator Sonia Siwa said.

Siwa said the trash they collected was from bushes blocking the drainage system, hundreds of cigarette buds, and empty beer bottles and cans.

PDM does its cleanup every month, collecting up to 1,000 lbs of trash.

For more information and to join the monthly clean up, call the Kinpachi Restaurant at 233-7715 and ask for Siwa. *(Jayson Camacho)*



Starting their first cleanup for this year, Paseo de Marianas Promoters Inc., the Kinpachi Restaurant staff, Saipan Awaodori members, and three students clean up the Paseo de Marianas area on Saturday, collecting 1,520 lbs of trash.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Survivors, caregivers support meeting on Thursday

All people facing cancer, their family members, and caregivers are invited to the next Commonwealth Cancer Association monthly support meeting scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015, starting at 5:30pm at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's Chamolinian Room. To RSVP or for more information, call the Commonwealth Cancer Association at 682-0050 or email at ccamarianas@gmail.com or cca@ccamarianas.org. *(CCA)*

PH mobile consular outreach on Saipan

The Philippine Consulate General in Agana, Guam announced that the schedule for biometrics capturing of the pre-processed passport applications is already available.

To avoid delays in the processing of said applications, applicants are advised *not* to fold copies of the original scanned requirements that were sent to us in advance.

Please note that all eP-

assport applications require "personal appearance." Please wear proper attire with collar.

Applicants included in the list are advised to be present in the venue on the time and date indicated in the schedule. Time slot of the "no show" applicants will be cancelled. *(PCG)*

STEM Fair on March 28

The CNMI Public School System is hosting the Annual Islandwide Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Fair on March 28, 2015, Saturday, from 8am to 3pm at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Participants include students from both public and private schools from Rota, Tinian and Saipan. Students will be presenting their projects in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Registration and setup begins at 3:30pm on March 27, 2015. Judging will begin promptly at 9am on March 28, 2015 with an open house and awards ceremony in that same afternoon. *(PR)*

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 20, 2012

Merrill Lynch fights back, sues Fund

New York-based Merrill Lynch, the former investment consultant of the NMI Retirement Fund that is being blamed for the staggering losses incurred by the Fund's portfolio, is lashing back with its own lawsuit against the Fund. In the lawsuit it filed yesterday in federal court, it is suing the Fund over the filing of lawsuits against the company without arbitration. Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Smith Inc., collectively known as Merrill Lynch, is also suing the Fund board of trustees, former Fund employee Mariano Taitano, former CNMI Ports Authority employee Roman T. Tudela, and current Commonwealth Utilities Corp. employee Patricia Guerrero.

Lawsuit of man who claimed brain injury dismissed

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona dismissed yesterday for lack of prosecution a lawsuit filed by a man who claimed that he sustained a brain injury due to many years of exposure to solvents at his jobsite at the Power Plant 4 in Puerto Rico, Saipan. Manglona dismissed without prejudice Adolfo M. Lumbad's lawsuit that was filed on Dec. 10, 2008. Dismissed without prejudice means the plaintiff can

re-file a new lawsuit on the same claim in the future.

January 20, 2009

Senate OKs revised \$156.76M budget

The Senate unanimously passed a revised fiscal year 2009 budget of \$156.76 million yesterday during a regular session. Several senators said they had reservations in passing the budget bill but felt it was imperative to have controls in place. "Despite some of the minor issues, I will forgo that because there is a need for accountability," said Sen. Joseph Mendiola. The House of Representatives passed the budget bill last week. It now heads to the governor, where he will have 20 days to sign the bill, line item veto it, or veto it altogether. The spending plan includes \$148.1 million of projected government revenue, augmented with \$5.17 million in Compact Impact funds, and \$3.5 million of "unencumbered" money taken from numerous accounts outside the general fund, for a total of \$156.76 million.

Local group to join suit vs federalization

A group that includes former House Speaker Oscar Rasa is joining the CNMI government's lawsuit against federalization, with the help of a local law firm that has agreed to provide its legal services for free. The O'Connor law firm had approached the CNMI Descents For Self Government and Indigenous Rights, offering its services to the group in filing a motion to support the lawsuit filed by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial against the federal government. Former House Speaker Oscar Rasa, the official spokesman and adviser of the group, said that he met with the O'Connor lawyers yesterday where they agreed to

participate in the lawsuit.

January 20, 2007

Car flips over, hits 4 vehicles

An alleged intoxicated motorist was injured when he lost control of his car, causing it to go airborne and hitting four other vehicles that were parked in front of Joeten Chalan Piao early yesterday morning. Police director Pete Leon Guerrero told [I] Saipan Tribune/[I] yesterday that the driver suffered minor injuries and was arrested for driving while under the influence of alcohol and refusing to take a breathalyzer test. Leon Guerrero said he has no information yet as to the driver's identity. The police director said preliminary investigation showed that the motorist was driving north at about 4am when he struck the center island along Beach Road, went airborne, flew to the opposite lane, then hit four other cars that were parked in front of Joeten.

Saipan man pleads guilty in tax-shelter case

A Saipan man pleaded guilty to making false statements in connection with the government's probe into allegedly fraudulent tax shelters marketed by former executives of KPMG LLP. Michael Grandinetti, a senior executive with the United Micronesia Development Association, entered his plea at a hearing Thursday before U.S. District Judge Thomas P. Griesa. At the hearing, Grandinetti, 54, said he lied to a prosecutor and an Internal Revenue Service agent when he told them in a March 2006 telephone call that he had disclosed to the UMDA's board of directors that he received secret side payments from a group of tax shelter promoters.

CHCC revenue at \$30M; expenditures at \$40M

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. raked in a total of \$30 million in revenue in fiscal year 2014, much lesser than the over \$40 million it spent during the same period, according to the corporation's annual report.

Chief executive officer Esther Muna's annual report for fiscal year 2014 states that, as of Sept. 30, 2014, CHCC's revenue totaled \$30,713,869, while incurring \$40,012,776 in expenditures.

Muna stated that the hospital's revenue and expenses were not from federal grants.

Broken down, CHCC received \$11,130,695 from Medi-

icaid, \$10,016,585 from Medicare, \$8,755,531 from other health insurance, \$180,834 from indirect cost, \$79,500 from rental/lease, \$2,178 from interest income, and \$548,546 from other revenues.

"Most of the reimbursement CHCC gets is from hospital and dialysis services through the Medicare and Medicaid programs and from private insurances. The reimbursement is used to fund services provided throughout CHCC, including Rota Health Center and Tinian Health Center. Maintaining compliance with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services regulations is still of highest priority when using those funds," Muna said.

CHCC's expenses were mostly on wages, salaries, and benefits, utilities, and medical supplies. CHCC's expenditures for wages, salaries, and benefits totaled \$24,169,779, comprising 60.41 percent of total expenditures. Utilities cost a total of \$6,214,859, about 15.53 percent of expenditures. Medical supplies totaled \$5,738,146, about 14.34 percent of expenditures.

Grant monies

CHCC obtained a total of \$8,307,607 in grant funding in fiscal year 2014. A total of \$5,019,026 was acquired for public health services; \$1,343,674 went to the Women's, Infant and Children and Kagman Community Cen-

ter; \$813,509 for the Community Guidance Center, and \$621,885 for hospital and others.

Muna said the grants fund 147 employees at CHCC and most of the grants are funded by the Centers for Disease Control, Department of Agriculture, Health Resources and Services Administration, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

CDC funds go toward promoting health and quality of life by preventing and controlling disease, injury and disability. DOA funds the WIC program. HRSA provides funding to expand health care services for the underserved, focusing on health professions, HIV/AIDS, maternal and child

health, primary health care, rural health, and healthcare systems. SAMHSA supports programs for substance use disorders and mental illness.

"CHCC anticipates opening a grants management office for this year to not only manage the grants it already has but also to apply for grants fitting for the organization. A federal grant from the National Public Health Improvement Initiative will provide funding for training of grant writers and employees for this office, improving the quality for the grant and building internal capacity to allow for CHCC to apply for more competitive grants," Muna said.

Since its creation in October

2011, CHCC's development had been tenuous but Muna noted that since then CHCC has continued to provide services to those who could not afford to pay, despite the small budget appropriations for the corporation.

"A \$2 million annual appropriation is clearly insufficient investment, especially when health care matters to our people and our leaders. The loss of income from the Medicaid-match and from providing services to those that cannot afford to pay, the indigent, should be considered when deciding future appropriations. We need to invest appropriately because our people deserve the best," Muna said.

Bill for PSS teacher rep selection process prefled

Sen. Justo Quitugua (Ind-Saipan) has prefled a bill that would provide for the selection process for the vacant position of teacher representative for the Public School System.

Senate Bill 19-03 states that the education commissioner would submit the name of the PSS Teacher of the Year to the governor to be appointed as the CNMI State Board of Education

teacher representative.

The teacher representative appointed by the governor would serve a term of one year or until the next PSS Teacher of the Year is selected and appointed by the governor.

The bill also gives a successor to the teacher representative in any event he or she is not able to continue his or her term.

"In the event that the ap-

pointed Public School System teacher representative is not able to serve the complete term for whatever reason, the governor shall appoint the Teacher of the Year candidate in the last overall selection who received the next highest number of votes from the PSS Teacher of the Year selection panel and is willing to serve the remainder of the term," it read.

Under the CNMI Constitution, the teacher representative serves as a nonvoting ex-officio member to the BOE who is selected by the teachers within PSS. It also provides that the selection process of the teacher representative be provided by law.

For the longest time, BOE and PSS have pushed that the CNMI Teacher of the Year be appointed teacher representa-

tive. However, the Legislature has recommended that an election be held among teachers to determine their representative on the board. The BOE has rejected this recommendation. Earlier, it drafted an executive order for the governor that would create a system where the governor would appoint the teacher selected by his or her colleagues as 'Teacher of the

Year" as the non-voting teacher representative on the board.

Erstwhile attorney general Gilbert Birnbrick found that the CNMI Constitution requires that law provide the process. Because of this, the appointment of the public school teacher representative "is not self-executing," and the governor cannot validly appoint a teacher representative.

Quitugua's bill, which was prefled last Jan. 13, hopes to remedy that. *(Mark Rabago)*

HOPWOOD STARS



National Junior Speech and Debate Association winners pose with Hopwood school officials.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Congratulations to the following Thespians and NJFL winners at Hopwood Jr. High School.

International Junior Thespians Society winners

SOLO MUSICAL

1st Place Arianne Antonio
2nd Place Erica Tubera
3rd Place Rachel Apritado
4th Place Mikaela Rosario

MONOLOGUE

1st Place Kelvin Wolf
2nd Place Kaye Ann Obando
4th Place Julia Malate

National Junior Speech and Debate Association

EXTEMPORANEOUS

4th Natalie Montano

ORIGINAL ORATORY

5th Place Marielle Sambalay

IMPROMPTU

1st Place Julia Malate
1st Place Kelvin Wolf
2nd Place Kaye Ann Obando
3rd Place Natalie Montano
4th Place Mikaela Rosario
4th Place Jacklyn Mae Batu
5th Place Limbert Guiaio

DUO INTERPRETATION

5th Place Karen Ann Irinaka and Asia Raulerson

DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION

1st Place Kelvin Wolf

PROSE

1st Place Kelvin Wolf
1st Place Kaye Ann Obando
1st Place Mikaela Rosario
2nd Place Kathleen Lacanilao
3rd Place Jacklyn Batu
4th Place Julia Malate
5th Place Limbert Guiaio

POETRY READING

2nd Place Julia Malate
3rd Place Kathleen Lacanilao
5th Place Karen Ann Irinaka



International Junior Thespians Society winners pose with school officials.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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'Selma' fitting tribute on MLK Day

By **DARRYL LORENZO WELLINGTON**
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

On this Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a new movie couldn't be more appropriate. "Selma" is an effective recreation of the politics behind King's nonviolent movement, as well as the toll King's mission took on his marriage and his personal life. The movie, directed by a black woman, Ava DuVernay, focuses on events leading up to King's successful march in Selma, Ala., that galvanized public support behind the Voting Rights Act President Johnson ushered into law in 1965.

"Selma" is rendered poignant by David Oyelowo's extraordinary performance, which captures King's style, inflections and persona to perfection. You could almost believe King was portraying himself. It's criminal that Oyelowo was unfairly overlooked in the Oscar nominations for best actor, as was DuVernay in the best director category. Though "Selma" did get a couple of nominations, it deserves many more.

The events portrayed in "Selma" should be a standard part of the education of every American high school student, yet 50 years later it is sometimes still contentious to bring civil rights history into classrooms. King is indisputably a seminal figure in American history. Extraordinarily, "Selma" is the first major Hollywood biopic devoted to him.

During his lifetime, King was the country's premier civil rights leader. But while he was beloved internationally, he was also despised by millions in his home country. He was under continual surveillance by the FBI, and lived under the constant threat of assassination. King did not live to see the day when politicians from both major parties sing his praises.

King's legacy has two major aspects. America remains significantly more comfortable with one aspect than the other.

It's popular to honor King for his personal courage and his nonviolence. The passage of time reinforces the fact that King's moral convictions were entirely on the right side of history. Martin Luther King Day commemorations have sometimes become happy, celebratory occasions by emphasizing King's benevolence.

What's harder to swallow for some people is how wrong America was during his time. American values were so distorted that a lot of white Americans supported legal segregation. It remains problematic for many patriotic Americans to acknowledge how deeply the country betrayed its own stated ideals.

King's legacy still compelled political battles through the 1970s and '80s. Americans with guilty consciences abhorred the duty to honor him. President Reagan reluctantly signed the federal holiday honoring King into law in 1983. The last state to sanction King Day was South Carolina in 2000.

"Selma" provides an opportunity to look back. But this Martin Luther King Jr. Day in particular, we also have to look at current injustice. The movie arrives at a time when the country has been riveted by a nationwide movement against police brutality. No one can doubt on Jan. 19 that King remains relevant—and his work unfinished.

Darryl Lorenzo Wellington is a poet and journalist in Santa Fe, N.M.



Down Keystone XL

I was in Calgary this past July, with a side trip to Edmonton, not going further north to Fort McMurray where tar sands abound, but my conversation with folks at a Calgary parish was on the liquefied tar sands the province of Alberta pipes down to the Gulf of Mexico. Nine out of 10 of the Catholic faithful supported the venture funded by the likes of the Texas' Koch brothers for the job it will furnish local citizens and the revenue it will earn the province.

The Keystone XL pipeline construction is a controversial legislative item as the White House continues to delay its approval and the Republican Congress vows to legislate the legal continuation with BHO promising a veto as his executive hand is going to be forced. The GOP may not, however, have the numbers to override a veto. It appears that BHO in his last two years is determined to play hardball. Besides, existing lines already zigzags the stuff to the Gulf anyway!

An 80-year-old friend from Houston, ex-veep for Gulf Oil along with significant other, "fling their bodies into the barb wires of history" as it were, and a few colleagues raise their voices against the construction supported heavily by well-paid lobbyists in Congress.

On Saipan, where accumulation of carbon monoxide by the lagoon does not take long to be breezed out into the ocean, is happily "safe" from the effects of climate change, in spite of ex-VP Gore's warning of global warming in *An Inconvenient Truth*. Informed ones blithely pray the woes of the world away in our predominantly religious theistic island, or ignore it in strident stances of sophisticated science-buffeted denials. Either way, many are happy campers.

Of course, residing in *Dong Bei* where one is resigned to the accumulated effects of burning the abundant *mei* to generate power (also in Shaanxi and Shanxi, and Pennsylvania and Kentucky in the U.S.) has me prepared for the advent of asthma in due time. Given the brevity of my remaining 16.5 years before an anticipated exit, and not overly preoccupied with longevity nor eternity of one's footprints in humanity's sands of time, I am spared the high level of tomorrow's anxiety that many colleagues fall into.

So I understand the nonchalance that accompanies the reality of climate change; the Earth's surface, with dislodged tectonic plates gurgling and gushing out more pools of black gold for industry, the enlightened direction of the United States and China agreeing to cut down on carbon emission is refreshing. Innovation and creativity with a lot of responsible sense overrides the rapacious greed of corporate energy concerns determined to keep us coughing under our breath. Nah!

The Keystone XL pipeline is not just a practical issue, though

By **JAIME VERGARA**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.



it is the safest way to transport liquefied tar sands compared to alternatives, but the wider issue other than the immediate returns on investment and employment harkens into the health of a planet itself whose holding capacity is now in excess of its innate capabilities, and the neurological evolution of creatures in it are going bonkers way off the ordinary chart and scale. Incidence of autism alone indicates that the metabolic system lags behind in its ability to adjust to the increasing exposure of our bodies to chemical stimuli.

Protest against the Keystone XL pipeline is North America's struggle with sanity. We will be sad to see the triumph of the quick buck at Wall Street over the long-term health of planetary creatures on Main Street, and the coughing, wheezing, rasping, croaking, belching functions of Mother Gaia! Profit, however, trumps sanity.

China is still addicted to coal burning. Politically smart, it built electric plants in the grasslands of Inner Mongolia, away from the prying eyes of the public, but Siberian winds deliver its atmospheric effluents into my *Dong Bei* skies, and PM 2.5 still keeps Beijing in mouth masks, and I, in earmuffs. It also contributes to climate warming that melts ice at the polar caps, igniting turbulent weather in the planet that is raising alarmed concerns.

In the Euro-American markets, time is of the essence. Bottom lines are read per quarter to determine return on investments. Thus, the anxiety accompanying the urgency of dealing with climate change is heightened. Not so in the Oriental mindset where the tranquility of internal space and the equanimity of neighborly relations precede human anxieties over visual space. Occidentals call the stance a practice of "short-term" measures with long-term consequences; Orientals do it to "keep face," adequate for now but nursed along the way in the *yin-yang* cycles of life.

Keystone XL is a struggle between heavily financed Leviathan corporate Goliaths against the pebble-slinging shepherd boy David, but the story is heading toward the ogre getting the upper hand and my placard holding friend literally flings his body into the annals of yet another frustrating bend of public protest in the meandering river of human history.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

By JIM DEMINT

The Heritage Foundation

Jim DeMint is the president of The Heritage Foundation.



Opportunity for all, favoritism to none

Growing up, most Americans are taught to treat everyone fairly and recognize the importance of equality under the law. Despite political disagreements and the headache of elections and campaigns, we learn that a free society plays no favorites.

Most of us still believe in that. Unfortunately, many in Washington, D.C., don't.

You can see it in the way the federal government treats businesses, from Wall Street to internet search engines. Politicians rail against corporations and vow to protect taxpayers, investors, and users with tough new regulations. They need help crafting legislation, so they turn to the big players—whether they're banks, tech companies or manufacturers—and ask for expert advice.

The big dogs jump at the chance to rig the system against competitors who can't afford to compete under the new regulatory regime, and presto! The government is out picking winners and losers in the marketplace, even worse than before. We call it "cronyism," and Washington is the Crony Capital.

It comes from the idea that Washington should fix everyone's problems instead of freeing them to solve their own. This error manifests itself in many ways.

You can see it in an education system that puts demands of union bosses in front of the needs of our children. You can see it in the actions of politicians doing anything they can to stop education savings accounts, charter schools and other school choice initiatives.

You can see it in a health care system that forces some people into certain programs and shoves some out, while limiting options—all promoted by big insurance companies when Obamacare was being pushed through Congress.

You can see it in big tax breaks received by interests large enough to pay for lobbyists—but missed by the small business that couldn't possibly hire their own.

They shouldn't have to. Two senators and a congressman can be sufficient representation for both a telecom wizard in Silicon Valley and a soccer mom in Indianapolis, if we return to constitutional government.

Fortunately, more than a few senators and representatives agree. They recently gathered on Capitol Hill for a Conservative Policy Summit, hosted by Heritage Action for America. It was inspiring to see so many like-minded legislators get together and work out ways to open up the American dream to everyone.

We discussed the EXPAND Act, which encourages a modern, "all of the above" approach to energy production that would help replace the maze of tax exemptions and carve-outs for special interests with lower rates across the board for all energy producers. We also looked at the CHOICE Act, which gives states leeway to set aside more money for student scholarships and gives parents more control over saving for education. And the "too big to fail" crowd better beware: the PATH Act protects taxpayers, opens up competition in the housing market and ends the bailout-fueled interference of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

These are just a few of the initiatives we want to put on President Barack Obama's desk this year. They all have one big thing in common: they end special treatment for certain well-connected people and businesses and lobbies, and give everyone a chance. Our rallying cry of the day: "Opportunity for all, and favoritism to none." This makes sense to many Americans, but the "cronies" will fight it tooth and nail.

This isn't just a conservative idea. It doesn't matter who you voted for in the last election, and it doesn't matter what party you're in. There are some things we can all agree on: creating more jobs, lowering the cost of living, ensuring every student gets a good education, and putting a barrier between the government and favored special interests.

All of us deserve the opportunity to grow and succeed. Americans don't usually ask for special treatment; we're happy with a fair shot. If we can get Washington out of the way, and return more dollars and decisions to families and communities, that's a fine start.

Traveling with disabilities

By THOMAS M. THORNBURGH

SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

When I was 14 years old, I broke my fibula in my leg, the smaller bone running parallel with the tibia. This happened while playing football in Troy, Ohio, 20 miles south of Dayton. It also just so happened that my father got a job offer in Palikir, Pohnpei, so we had to move weeks after I broke my leg. I had to travel with my leg in a 20-lb cast that ran above my knee.

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a disability is "A physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity." Major life activities are things like, but not limited to, breathing, eating, sleeping, speaking, hearing, seeing and walking. The ADA is the biggest piece of legislation protecting people with disabilities from being discriminated against because of a disability in America. It was signed into law by George Bush Sr. on July 26, 1990, on the White House lawn.

While having this temporary disability, I had to fly from Columbus Ohio, to Pohnpei Island with my family of six. It was an ordeal to say the least. The hassle of using crutches in those tight planes made my claustrophobia worse and I almost lost my cool. I struggled up and down the skinny aisle to get to and from the bathroom, hit a couple of folks accidentally with my crutches, and even got stuck in the bathroom because it was so tight and I had to use my walking aids. Complications increased when we disembarked, and changed planes, and then took off again. Unfortunately, there is no direct flight from Columbus to Pohnpei.

Romney is the only one who thinks he's Reagan

Yeah, this one isn't gonna fly.

Mitt Romney's third campaign for the White House got off to a good start...for about three days. The backlash this week came not just from coreconservatives, who have never been enthusiastic about the ideological chameleon, but also from just about everyone who isn't a die-hard Romney supporter. This group includes quite a few mainstream conservatives, according to *Washington Post* and *New York Times* reporting.

What is Team Romney's answer to those who say he's had his chance?

"If that's the case, then Ronald Reagan never would have become president," said Eric Fehrnstrom, Romney's longtime spokesman. "Reagan ran three times. Mitt learns from experience. If he does run, he will run his strongest campaign yet."

Yeesh. I can just imagine all the Republican contenders and conservative leaders going all Bentsen on the Mittster, as the *Wall Street Journal* did Wednesday.

Does Romney really want to die on this hill?

Between Reagan's first (1968) and second (1976) presidential runs, he went from being an inexperienced governor who had given an impressive speech for Barry Goldwater in 1964 to being a successful two-term governor who continued to consolidate his position as leader of the conservative movement. Then, in the run-up to his third try in 1980, Reagan remained the clear conservative leader. A real, influential leader: His attack on the Panama Canal treaties, for example, made opposition to them the standard conservative position.

In other words, Reagan didn't just get better at running for president. He was a much more impressive politician with far more accomplishments by 1980 than he had been in 1968.

Romney? Not so much.

GOP's new ploy to destroy Social Security

The GOP has a fresh strategy to attack Social Security: pitting older Americans against people with disabilities.

The Social Security trust fund supports retired workers, while the Disability Insurance Trust Fund provides for working people of all ages who become too disabled to work full time. According to the Social Security Administration, the trust fund has enough money to pay full benefits until 2034, but the disability insurance fund will need to be replenished next year in order to avoid cuts of approximately 20 percent for its 8.9 million recipients.

Congress can keep both funds solvent through 2033 by simply shifting a small percentage of money from the trust to the disability insurance fund, according to the Social Security Administration. It has done this type of reallocation routinely almost a dozen times to shore up both funds.

But one of the first actions of the new House majority was to pass a rule change by a vote of 234-168 prohibiting any reallocation that isn't accompanied by cuts to recipients or increases in revenue.

Rep. Sam Johnson, R-Texas, a chief proponent of the measure, said he is trying to keep the "fraud-plagued" disability program

About 30 hours later, and after countless plane transits and waiting around, this nightmare ended when we finally landed in beautiful Pohnpei. It was just not the best experience, and I would not want that for anyone else.

I will say, however, that the stewardesses and airline personnel made my trip a lot more bearable as they frequently checked up on me and gave me extra snacks, and or drinks whenever I wanted. They smiled a lot and seemed genuinely concerned about my broken leg. Many of them would ask, and I would proudly say "football." When we got to Texas, and I waited for others to disembark first, I remember one tiny female airline personnel about a hundred pounds exerting great effort as she strained to push me up a steep jetway that seemed to go on and on. At the top of the jetway she almost passed out, and with what seemed to be her last breath, she squeezed out: "I sure got my exercise, didn't I."

Today, looking back, I wish I could meet them all again, and thank each and every one of them for the wonderful service, which was above and beyond their call of duty. They have to deal with a lot, and I was a handful.

On a final note, the ADA does *not* cover air carriers today; the Air Carrier Access Act, also a federal legislation, covers air carriers. See more online at... http://www.disabilitytravel.com/airlines/air_carrier_act.htm. For more on disabilities and or the ADA, please call NMPASI at 235-7273/4; fax at 235-7275; TTY at 235-7278; or online at www.nmpasi.org.

Thomas M. Thornburgh is program manager at the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc.

By JONATHAN BERNSTEIN

Bloomberg News

Jonathan Bernstein is a Bloomberg View columnist. Readers may send him email at jbernstein62@bloomberg.net.



He first ran for president as a successful one-term governor, although he had to repudiate much of what he had done when he moved to the national stage. He ran for president a second time as a successful one-term governor. He is now running for president yet again as ... a successful one-term governor.

As far as I can see, he has done exactly zero to enhance his credentials apart from having now developed extensive experience in running for president. If he has ever been an influential leader among Republicans on any policy position, I've clean forgotten about it.

More to the point, no one has rallied to Romney's side other than his core supporters, and reporters are having no trouble finding 2012 supporters who are willing to distance themselves publicly from his third effort. And not only has no one dropped out of the race in the last week since Romney and Jeb Bush stepped up their efforts, other than the already bearded Paul Ryan, but Rand Paul, Chris Christie, Scott Walker and others are ramping up their own campaigns.

Right now, the odds of Romney's campaign fizzling out before summer appear to be higher than the odds of his making it to New Hampshire, let alone repeating as the Republican's presidential nominee.

By MIKE ERVIN

Tribune News Service

Mike Ervin is a Chicago-based writer and a disability-rights activist with ADAPT (www.adapt.org).



from "raiding" the retirement fund. This assertion is nonsense. Disability insurance fraud rates are miniscule. A 2013 Government Accountability Office report concluded that only about 0.4 percent of beneficiaries may receive payments they don't deserve.

But get ready to hear politicians like Johnson peddle sensational anecdotes about scammers faking disabilities so they can collect payments.

The GOP can only achieve its elusive dream of gutting and privatizing Social Security by first creating an imaginary crisis. Don't fall for it.

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY

Mostly sunny with isolated showers. Light and variable winds around 10 mph in the afternoon.

▲85° ▼77°

WEDNESDAY

Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.

▲86° ▼77°

THURSDAY

Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

▲88° ▼78°

FRIDAY

Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

▲88° ▼79°

SATURDAY

Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

▲88° ▼79°

Yesterday's Satellite Image

PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 2015
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front curves southwestward from 25N178E to 16N150E then continues westward as a shear line to beyond 130E at 17N. Cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 180 miles north of this boundary east of 136E. To the west of 136E showers and isolated thunderstorms extend northward to beyond 25N. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms across Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae states and south of Majuro between 2N and 6N from 151E to the date line.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia			
Guam And Rota	Thundershowers	▲ 85	▼ 77
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲ 87	▼ 77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲ 85	▼ 78
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲ 84	▼ 79
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲ 86	▼ 80
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	▲ 83	▼ 79
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲ 84	▼ 80

Around the Globe			
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲ 82	▼ 61
Beijing	Sunny	▲ 43	▼ 24
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲ 66	▼ 57
Honolulu	Sunny	▲ 83	▼ 66
London	Mostly Sunny	▲ 39	▼ 29
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲ 75	▼ 52
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲ 89	▼ 72
Melbourne	Windy	▲ 84	▼ 62
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲ 76	▼ 65
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲ 42	▼ 28
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲ 49	▼ 34
Paris	Snow	▲ 40	▼ 31
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	▲ 49	▼ 35
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲ 58	▼ 46
Salem	Partly Cloudy	▲ 52	▼ 36
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲ 62	▼ 50
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲ 38	▼ 24
Tokyo	Sunny	▲ 51	▼ 35
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲ 47	▼ 32

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides			
Saipan Harbor			
1:19 AM	Today	High Tide:	-0.6 Feet
8:13 AM	Today	Low Tide:	2.0 Feet
1:41 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.1 Feet
6:49 PM	Today	Low Tide:	2.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset		
Today	6:47 AM	6:10 PM
Wednesday	6:47 AM	6:10 PM
Thursday	6:47 AM	6:11 PM
Friday	6:47 AM	6:11 PM
Saturday	6:47 AM	6:12 PM

Moonrise/Moonset		
Today	6:03 AM	5:53 PM
Wednesday	6:59 AM	6:56 PM
Thursday	7:53 AM	7:58 PM
Friday	8:45 AM	8:59 PM
Saturday	9:34 AM	9:58 PM

NEWS DESK

For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 5, 2015

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily	UA5069	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA5068	8:00am	8:50am	3	UA5071	6:40am	7:30am	3
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7	UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	2:20pm	4:00pm	6, 7 via Rota	UA5039	1:00pm	1:50pm	6, 7
UA5078	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 5	UA5038	1:10pm	2:40pm	2, 4 via Rota
UA5038	3:10pm	4:00pm	2, 4	UA5077	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 5
UA5040	6:55pm	7:45pm	1, 5	UA5041	5:35pm	6:25pm	1, 5
UA5078	8:35pm	9:25pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7	UA5077	7:15pm	8:05pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5044	10:40pm	11:30pm	1, 5	UA5043	9:20pm	10:10pm	1, 5
SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)				GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)			
UA5039	2:20pm	2:55pm	6, 7	UA5038	1:00pm	1:35pm	2, 4
ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)				ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN			
UA5039	3:25pm	4:00pm	6, 7	UA5038	2:05pm	2:40pm	2, 4
SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)				PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN			
DL287	6:05am	1:10am+1	2, 6 via NRT	DL298	4:35am	3:00pm	3, 7 via NRT
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL297	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily	DL288	8:55pm	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1	OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	7C 3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ6063	3:20am	7:10am	3, 4, 6, 7	OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily	OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C 3401	4:30pm	8:20pm	Daily	OZ6053	8:50pm	2:10am+1	2, 3, 5, 6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7	OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:00am	8:35am	1, 4, 5, 7	3U8647	10:30pm	4:30am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 4, 5, 7	MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)				GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8646	4:30am	7:30am	2, 6	3U8645	7:55pm	3:10am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN	OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	PR110/UA5041	7:35am	6:25pm	1, 5 via GUM
UA5069/PR111	2:45am	4:50pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM	PR110/UA5077	7:35am	8:05pm	3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	7:20am	2, 7 via GUM	PR110/UA5043	7:35am	10:10pm	1, 5 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM	DL172/288	9:40am	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 via NRT
UA5070/183	4:15am	8:45pm	2, 5 via GUM	UA190/5077	9:55am	8:05pm	2, 7 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	UA190/5077	10:00am	8:05pm	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/275	6:05am	9:35pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via NRT	OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
UA5071/PR111	6:40am	4:50pm	3 via GUM	OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA5071/PR111	7:15am	4:50pm	1, 5, 6, 7 via GUM	UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:00am	9:50pm	3 via GUM	UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM	UA184/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6, 7 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	UA184/5038	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	4 via GUM-Rota
UA5039/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	6, 7 via Rota-GUM	UA184/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM	UA184/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	5 via GUM	UA184/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	1 via GUM	UA184/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM	UA184/5071	10:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN	UA184/5038	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	2 via GUM-Rota
				UA184/5077	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	5 via GUM
				UA184/5041	10:59pm	6:25pm+1	5 via GUM
				UA184/5077	10:59pm	8:05pm+1	2 via GUM
				UA184/5043	10:59pm	10:10pm+1	5 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/723	2:10am	12:50pm	1 via ICN	OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:40am	12:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
UA5070/179	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM	OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA5068/179	8:00am	10:35pm	3 via GUM	OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA5068/179	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 5, 6 via GUM	UA180/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA5039/179	2:20pm	10:35pm	6 via Rota-GUM	UA180/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5078/179	3:10pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via GUM	UA180/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6 via GUM
OZ604/749	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN	UA180/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
				UA180/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1, 5 via GUM
				UA180/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
				UA180/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.								
TINIAN TO SAIPAN			SAIPAN TO TINIAN			SAIPAN TO ROTA		
DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily	7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
			8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily			
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily	4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily			
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily	ROTA TO SAIPAN		
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily	12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily	4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily			
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily			
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily			
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily			
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily						
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily						

Agape's Guintu tops middle school Mathcourt contest

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI Mathcourt held its Middle School Statewide competition at the Saipan International School last Saturday morning. Three Agape Christian School students finished in the top five, with other top finishers from Marianas Baptist School and Grace Christian Academy.

Gold went to Frederic Dean

Michael Guintu, a sixth grader from Agape. Silver went to Su Hwan Bae, an eighth grader from MBA. Bronze went to Lucy Gu, a seventh grader from Agape school.

Fourth place went to Annie Wang, from Agape as well, and fifth place went to Min Hyeok Ha, an eighth grader from GCA.

Agape's trainer, Frederick Guintu, who also happened to be father of the top finisher, said

they trained after classes every day. "We didn't do anything except practice, just to prepare for this. Luckily, in God's will, we are victorious."

His son, "Mac" Guintu, said he "studied a lot" for the competition. "The target round was easy but the rest was hard," he said on the day's competition.

Agape also finished first in the "team round" of the competition, beating 12 other school teams.

MBA's Bae said he practiced "almost every day" for the competition. He said it felt "great" to make it to the top five.

Reo Arriola, a Mathcourt administrator, said all top three finishers have an "equal chance of making it to Team CNMI," the high school team that competes in the nationwide competition, depending if they meet the Mathleague criteria.

He said last Saturday's com-

petition went "very smooth." He said Saipan Southern High School and Marianas High School assisted with scoring for the competition, while other schools provided volunteer proctors.

"We got done by 11:30am," he said, adding that this was "quick." The competition was slated to begin at 9am.

He said Mathcourt is very grateful to SIS for "stepping

up" and offering their school as a venue after another school backed out at the last minute.

On Jan. 31, the fourth and fifth grade regional and the high school state competition will take place, probably at Saipan Southern High School, according to Arriola.

The high school state competition is where the members of "Team CNMI" will be determined, he said.

SCC workshop today focuses on EEO issues

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce will hold its monthly seminar today, Jan. 20, from 9am to 12 noon at the Marianas Business Plaza, Suite 315.

The three-hour workshop will concentrate on the rights and responsibilities of both employees and employers, and how to inform, prevent, and document the sensitive issues of EEO concerns and workplace sexual harassment.

Learn how to implement and apply legally defensible best practices in your organization. This half-day seminar helps you gain confidence and expertise in dealing with EEO law and employee issues. You'll gain a comprehensive overview of employee discrimination/EEO and sexual harassment laws.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

■ HR managers, business owners, and supervisors/managers at all levels.

WHAT YOU WILL COVER

■ Major provisions...who is covered...the purpose of the EEO...types of discrimination...what it does not cover

■ Wrongful termination and at-will employment: definitions, contracts, public policy, negoti-

ated resignations, and discharge for cause

■ How to identify sexual harassment

HOW YOU WILL BENEFIT

■ Avoid costly litigations
■ Recruit, hire, discipline and terminate employees in a legal manner

■ Develop HR policies and procedures that comply with employment law and do not violate federal statutes

■ Know what constitutes "reasonable accommodations" and how to implement them without creating unique hardship

FACILITATORS

■ Frank Gibson, HR Support, CNMI (owner)

■ James Arenovski, Island Training Solutions (owner)

Registration for the seminar is being accepted at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce office at the Marianas Business Plaza Suite 315, 3rd floor. Call 234-7150 or e-mail coordinator@saipanchamber.com to reserve your attendance. Registration fee for Chamber members is \$20; (\$30 for non-Chamber members). Seating is limited to the first 40 paid attendees. (SCC)

PA Memo on military relocation open for comments until Jan. 23

PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM—Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific reminded the public Friday that the comment period deadline for the Programmatic Agreement Memo for Project J-001B: Finegayan Utilities and Site Improvements Phase 1 (PA Memo #2) is Jan. 23, 2015, Chamorro Standard Time. Comments may be submitted to criwebcomment@navy.mil.

PA Memos provide an opportunity for interested members of the public to participate in the Section 106 consultation process required under the National Historic Preservation Act. More specifically, PA Memo #2 presents summaries of the project description and locale, the historic properties that will be adversely affected and the DOD's plan for resolving adverse effect.

J-001B proposes the first phase of required utilities and site improvements at Naval Base Guam Telecommunica-

tions Site, should this area be the selected alternative for construction of a cantonment area to support the Guam and Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands Military Relocation. This project proposes to conduct construction and associated efforts, to include design work, for J-001B Finegayan Utilities and Site Improvements Phase 1 and future improvements and vertical construction projects within the bounds of Finegayan Utilities and Site Improvements Phase 1 at NBGTS.

To view PA Memo #2 in its entirety, log onto the NAVFAC Pacific Cultural Information website at <http://go.usa.gov/kZWG>. (Note the URL is case sensitive).

Those without Internet access may obtain a printed copy of PA Memo #2 from the Guam Historic Resources Division, located at 490 Chalan Palasyo, Agana Heights, 96910 (in the Department of Parks and Recreation Office). (USN)

Largest tuna supplier in Western Pacific commits to MSC-certified tuna

KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan—FCF Fishery Company announced Friday that its joint investment, Nambawan, and its associated fleet, have signed a memorandum of understanding with PNAO/Pacificall as a commitment to maintaining the highest Marine Stewardship Council sustainability standards while trading tuna harvested from Pacific Island Nations waters.

Under the agreement, which has been several years in the making, FCF will work with the PNA and Pacificall on criteria for certification and ensuring traceability and reporting from fish harvested to transportation, and processing into its semi-finished and finished products.

"With this MOU, along with other committed vessels in our supply chain platform, FCF will be the largest solution provider of PNAO/MSC tuna from 'Ocean to Table,'" said FCF CEO WH Lee. "This truly is an exciting development—and 2015 has just begun."

FCF has been a leader in multiple projects throughout the PNA region for more than 30 years. The company co-founded Nabawan, a state-of-the-art tuna processing plant in Papua New Guinea in 2011, along with TSP and TPJ, major fishing companies of the Philippines. The Nabawan plant, slated to begin operations in September 2015, has the production capacity of up to 200 metric tons of tuna per day, and has an exclusive agreement with FCF to the global market.

The agreement helps effectively market the group's MSC-certified tuna while promoting the long-term sustainability of the PNA region.

"Combining their associated fleet's MSC certification under our PNA/Pacificall program is what sets it up for success," said Commercial Manager of PNA Fisheries Maurice Brownjohn. "This is truly a significant partnership in the spirit of regional

development as envisioned by the Ministers of Pacific Island Nations."

Currently, more than 60 FCF-associated fishing vessels are now poised for MSC certification. Over time, this could make way for more than 200,000 metric tons of tuna, effectively meeting the needs of the consumer market for future generations.

The FCF vessels are also registered with International Seafood Sustainability Foundation's Proactive Vessels Registry, which provides validation that tuna purchased by its members are meeting the ISSF sustainable standard.

Spain-based canning company Frinsa del Noroeste CEO Jorge Carregal added, "This is a tangible, sustainability-driven partnership that will provide European consumers with a reliable source of tuna supply that meets the very highest standards. It certainly represents a turning of the tide."

FCF and PNA/Pacificall will be working together over the next several weeks to develop criteria and long-range plans to bring the project to the market, from "Ocean to Table."

About FCF Fishery Co., Ltd. (FCF)

Fong Chun Formosa Fishery Company, Ltd. is one of the largest marine products trading companies globally with more than 40 years of experience in the trading and marketing of tuna products. FCF has established more than 30 subsidiaries, fishing bases and shipping agents throughout the world to handle the service needs of its customers. The company works closely with related governing and non-governing organizations to ensure environmental sustainability of marine life products. Learn more about the company's commitment to safety and environmental sustainability at www.fcf.com.tw. (PR)

SPC welcomes falling energy prices with caution

SUVA, Fiji—The Secretariat of the Pacific Community is optimistic that cheaper oil prices will not reduce the Pacific region's momentum toward a renewable energy and energy efficient future.

Falling global oil prices have given some relief to Pacific Islands' consumers who pay among the highest prices in the world at the petrol pump, mainly due to import costs.

"We're seeing significant decreases in oil prices but this should be translated into reduced electricity and transport costs, two key sectors that SPC is working on with Pacific governments," the Director of SPC's Economic Development Division, John Hogan, said.

"Our major concern right now is to see the price decreases passed on to consumers in the Pacific and that there's no erosion in the region's commitment to renewable energy and energy efficiency," Hogan said.

The head of SPC's Energy Program, Solomon Fitita, said that while cheaper energy prices could potentially promote inefficiencies and waste, SPC hoped governments would use this opportunity to raise revenue that could be invested in renewable energy and energy efficiency programs.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pacific Islands' consumers pay among the highest prices in the world at the petrol pump, mainly due to import costs.

"The transition to low-carbon economies should result in the long-term, permanent decrease in energy prices that the region is after," Fitita said.

SPC monitors and analyzes movements in the global and Pacific region energy markets and produces a Monthly Petroleum Price Review and the Pacific Fuel Price Monitor, which enable the 22 Pacific Island countries and territories to monitor and compare pricing in the region.

To ensure current price decreases are fairly passed on to consumers, an SPC Petroleum

Adviser is currently in the Cook Islands to review their fuel price template.

The price template reflects an agreed methodology among Pacific Island countries and territories for calculating the price of fuel. With technical assistance from SPC, the template is reviewed regularly to take account of the dynamic nature of the petroleum sector.

In the first quarter of 2015, SPC will also respond to requests from the governments of Tonga, Kiribati and Tuvalu to help review their petroleum pricing based on the template.

"Fuel prices continue to be volatile. Ten years ago, consumers were concerned that prices had reached \$60 per barrel. Four years later, the price had tripled, yet today we see prices back to around \$64," Hogan said. "The projections are that pricing will continue its downward trend, pushing many in the industry to be uneconomical and exit."

A new petroleum pricing manual introduced in December 2014 will familiarize petroleum pricing authorities in the Pacific with the terminologies, dynamics and realities of petroleum pricing. (SPC)

Business

Tourist numbers in Paris drop following terror attacks

PARIS (AP)—Gray skies over a half-empty Eiffel Tower.

Since last week's terrorist attacks that left 17 victims and three gunmen dead, the swarms of sightseers have thinned below Paris' most visited monument, baring the dull concrete of the giant plaza.

Just over a week after the attacks, only a handful of tourists were taking photos, and one or two having portraits sketched by resident artists. The long lines that normally snake around the Eiffel Tower's gargantuan pillars were a fraction of the length.

"It's been so calm since the attacks. There's hardly anyone at all," sandwich seller Kamel Bougrab said across the street.

Tourism officials couldn't give figures of the number of sightseers in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, but visits by The Associated Press to major sites and interviews with vendors indicated an initial drop in visitors.

British student Eric Dale, on a group trip with his college, said one of his classmates was kept back by her parents, who were fearful for her safety.

"My parents were nervous, but in the end they left the final decision up to me," he said.

An Eiffel Tower spokeswoman insisted that the attraction had recorded no drop in visits



French army soldiers patrol under the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Tuesday Jan. 13, 2015.

so far, compared to the relatively slow month of January 2014. But no official statistics have yet been compiled, and the situation could still change, she said on condition of anonymity because

of company policy.

Among the tourists that were still braving visits, many took comfort in the extra security presence. With 10,500 troops deployed across the country, in-

cluding 6,000 in the Paris region alone, the security operation put in motion after the attacks is the most extensive on French soil in recent history.

Lucinda Bay, 22, from Aus-

tralia said she came to the French capital with her sister despite initial fears.

"I'm a bit nervous, but I guess this can happen anywhere. I wouldn't want that to stop us visiting this beautiful city," she said, looking up at the 300.65 meter (986 feet) Eiffel Tower.

Over in the Louvre, lines were shorter too.

"For me it's good because I didn't have to wait too long," said Guatemalan Eric Velasquez, in front of Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa.

"I don't think tourists should stay away. I watched the response from the government and it was very fast, very good. It feels safe," he added.

The Louvre said that school visits to the Paris region, including museums, had been suspended by the Education Ministry because the capital was on "attack alert" status since last week. The Louvre normally receives several hundred schoolchildren a day, and their absence partly accounts for the thinner crowds. Also, mid-January is often slow as festive tourists have often gone back home following their New Year celebrations.

"This is a slow season anyway, so it's hard to distinguish what's causing the dip, that (it's January) or the attacks," the Louvre said.

Justice Dept. unveils new guidelines for US news leak probes

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Justice Department on Wednesday announced revised guidelines for obtaining records from the news media during criminal leak investigations, removing language that news organizations said was ambiguous and requiring additional levels of review before a journalist can be subpoenaed.

The updated policy revises protocols announced last year amid outrage among news organizations over Obama administration tactics.

The new guidelines come just days after the Justice Department formally abandoned a years-long effort to compel a New York Times reporter to testify in the trial of a former CIA officer accused of disclosing classified information. The actions, taken together, are signs of a more modulated approach for an administration long criticized for its aggressive handling of leak cases.

"These revised guidelines strike an appropriate balance between law enforcement's need to protect the American people and the news media's role in ensuring the free flow of information," Attorney General Eric Holder said Wednesday.

The Justice Department began reviewing its own longstanding guidelines in 2013 and last February issued new rules designed to give news organizations an opportunity to challenge subpoenas or search warrants in federal court. But news organizations expressed concern that the protections applied only to journalists involved in "ordinary news-gathering activities," language they said was vague and could be exploited by zealous prosecutors.

France sees 19,000 cyberattacks since terror rampage

PARIS (AP)—Hackers have targeted about 19,000 French websites since a rampage by Islamic extremists left 20 dead last week, a top French cyberdefense official said Thursday as the president tried to calm the nation's inflamed religious tensions.

France is on edge since last week's attacks, which began Jan. 7 at the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo. The paper, repeatedly threatened for its caricatures of the Muslim Prophet

Muhammad, buried several of its slain staff members Thursday even as it reprinted another weekly issue with Muhammad on its cover.

Calling it an unprecedented surge, Adm. Arnaud Coustiliere, head of cyberdefense for the French military, said about 19,000 French websites had faced cyberattacks in recent days, some carried out by well-known Islamic hacker groups.

The attacks, mostly relatively

minor denial-of-service attacks, hit sites as varied as military regiments to pizza shops but none appeared to have caused serious damage, he said. Military authorities launched round-the-clock surveillance to protect the government sites still coming under attack.

"What's new, what's important, is that this is 19,000 sites—that's never been seen before," Coustiliere said. "This is the first time that a country has been

faced with such a large wave."

Among the groups suspected of launching the attacks, French officials named MECA: Middle East Cyber Army, Fallaga team and Cyber Caliphate.

According to Arbor Networks, a private company that monitors Internet threats, in the past 24 hours alone, France was the target of 1,070 denial of service attacks. That's about a quarter as many as the United States, but the U.S. hosts 30

times as many websites.

Coustiliere called the attacks a response to the massive demonstrations against terrorism that drew 3.7 million people into the streets Sunday across France. He pointed to "structured groups" that used tactics like posting symbols of jihadist groups on companies' Web sites.

Two of the Paris terror attackers claimed allegiances to al-Qaida in Yemen and a third to the Islamic State group.

Declaring Asperger's disability a tricky decision

Q: As a psychologist, I am concerned about a client who is having difficulties at work. "Sharon" holds a technical position and has been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. She struggles with miscommunication and has gotten into some hurtful arguments with peers during stressful times.

On performance evaluations, Sharon always receives low marks on interpersonal skills. She has shared her diagnosis with her manager, but he does not believe that Asperger's is the cause of her conflicts. Do you think she should officially notify human resources about her disability?

A: Declaring a disability can be a double-edged sword, so anyone with a "hidden" condition should carefully weigh the decision to go public. On the plus side, an official diagnosis may trigger legal protections, thereby increasing job security. But although it may not be fair, people almost inevitably begin to view the person differently.

In Sharon's situation, one major consideration is how much control she has over these behaviors. Many technical employees with underdeveloped social skills simply have no desire to master the nuances of interpersonal interaction. If Sharon is capable

of improvement, but choosing to be interpersonally lazy, then she needs to make more of an effort.

On the other hand, people with Asperger's frequently have difficulty reading social situations and responding appropriately. So if Sharon truly lacks these skills, then requesting accommodation for her handicap might be a good idea. However, she should understand that this limitation might disqualify her from assignments where interpersonal aptitude is a necessity.

As Sharon's therapist, perhaps you could help her determine which behaviors she can change and which she cannot. Once she has the answer to that question, she may find it easier to assess the pros and cons of disclosing her diagnosis.

Q: One of my coworkers has a retired husband who has begun spending a lot of time in our office. Although "Jerry" is quite smart, he also tends to be bossy and intrusive. He constantly evaluates our work and tells us how we can do things more efficiently. How do you handle someone like this?

A: You shouldn't have to handle him at all, because that's your boss's job. Managers are responsible for establishing boundaries, and this fellow is violating a bunch of them. So the real question is why Jerry is being allowed to wander around

YOUR OFFICE COACH

By MARIE G. MCINTYRE
McClatchy-Tribune News Service

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freely in the first place.

To prompt your boss to address this issue, you and your colleagues should explain that Jerry's presence is making your work more difficult. Ask your manager to advise both Jerry and his wife that his office visits need to stop. As an employee, she should be held accountable for seeing that her husband complies with this instruction.

But if Jerry's meddling continues, kindly remember that you have no obligation to respond to his suggestions. If he persists in making comments about your job, simply smile and tell him you're too busy to talk. Jerry obviously doesn't have quite enough to do, but his boredom is definitely not your problem.

Nation

Obama to pitch middle-class economic plan in annual address

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama is turning to his biggest television audience of the year to pitch tax increases on the wealthiest Americans and put the new Republican Congress in the position of defending top income earners over the middle class.

As Obama continues to signal what he will propose during Tuesday's State of the Union address, senior administration officials said during the weekend that he will call for raising the capital gains rate on top income earners and eliminating a tax break on inheritances. The

revenue generated by those changes would fund new tax credits and other cost-saving measures for middle-class taxpayers, officials said.

Tax increases are rarely welcomed by congressional Republicans, who now hold majorities in the House and the Senate for the first time in Obama's presidency. Obama's tax proposals will likely be dismissed, if not outright ignored, by lawmakers outside the Democratic Party's liberal base.

"Are they going to agree on everything? Absolutely not. I think we should have a debate

in this country between middle-class economics and trickle-down economics and see if we can come to an agreement on the things we do agree on," White House senior adviser Dan Pfeiffer said Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation." He said the theme of the speech would be "middle-class economics."

Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., said he had heard all five of President Barack Obama's State of the Union addresses, which are filled with proposals both good and bad. But he said the president has fallen short by failing to establish close

ties to Congress.

"He's never reached out to Congress and Democrats will tell you the same thing. You can't get your proposals done unless you're willing to have a relationship with an important branch of government," Kinzinger said on ABC's "This Week."

Obama also is expected to call for lawmakers to make community college free for many students, increase paid leave for workers and enact broad cybersecurity rules. Administration officials disclosed details on the tax proposals on the condition of

anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the proposals by name ahead of the president's speech.

The centerpiece of the president's tax proposal is an increase in the capital gains rate on couples making more than \$500,000 per year to 28 percent, the same level as under President Ronald Reagan. The top capital gains rate has already been raised from 15 percent to 23.8 percent during Obama's presidency.

Obama also wants to close what the administration is calling the "trust fund loophole," a change that would

require estates to pay capital gains taxes on securities at the time they're inherited. Officials said the overwhelming impact of the change would be on the top 1 percent of income earners.

While GOP leaders have said they share Obama's desire to reform the nation's complicated tax code, the party has long been opposed to many of the proposals the president will outline Tuesday. For example, most Republicans want to lower or eliminate the capital gains tax and similarly want to end taxes on estates, not expand them.

US teens on alleged crime spree captured in Florida

By JENNIFER KAY and DYLAN LOVAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two teenage Kentucky sweethearts suspected in a crime spree of stolen vehicles and pilfered checks across the U.S. South have been taken into custody in Florida, authorities said Sunday.

Eighteen-year-old Dalton Hayes and his 13-year-old girlfriend, Cheyenne Phillips, were arrested without incident about 12:10 a.m. Sunday in Panama City Beach, according to authorities in both states. The two had eluded police in multiple states while raising concern about their increasingly bold behavior.

"I spoke to Dalton and he was very scared, and he wanted to come home," said Norman Chaffins, the sheriff of Grayson County, Kentucky, where the teens live. "He wanted me to come bring him home."

Chaffins said the teens were



AP
In this December 2014 file photo provided by Tammy Martin, her son Dalton Hayes poses with his girlfriend Cheyenne Phillips at his family's home in Leitchfield, Ky.

the end of the week.

In Kentucky, the two teens will face the same charges, including burglary, theft, criminal trespassing and criminal mischief, Chaffins said. Phillips will face charges in juvenile court, because she is a minor.

According to Bay County jail records, Hayes was held Sunday on a charge of custodial interference. He is scheduled for a first court appearance at 8:30 a.m. Monday.

Florida's Department of Children & Families was called to assist Panama City Beach Police, but Phillips was not in the state's custody, said DaMonica Rivas, a DCF spokeswoman.

"The juvenile has been taken to a safe location until arrangements with the family are made," Rivas said.

getting by on some cash found in a truck stolen in Georgia.

Authorities said the U.S. Marshal's Service and Panama City Beach Police discovered Hayes and Phillips asleep in a 2001 Toyota Tundra that was

stolen in Georgia. Officers surrounded the vehicle, and both Hayes and Phillips were taken into custody.

Chaffins told The Associated Press that the teens should be extradited back to Kentucky by

Youngest participant in 1965 Selma march describes the day

NEW YORK (AP)—Steady, loving confrontation.

Those were the first words Lynda Blackmon Lowery says she heard from the mouth of Martin Luther King, Jr. "And those three words changed my life," said Lowery, who at 15 was the youngest person to join King for the 1965 march from the Alabama cities of Selma to Montgomery, demanding voting rights for African-Americans.

On Sunday in New York, the now 64-year-old mother and grandmother showed the scar she still bears on the back of her head from a brutal beating at the hands of an Alabama state trooper during an earlier march when she was 14. It took 28 stitches to close the gash, and seven more for a cut above her right eye.

Lowery spoke at the New-York Historical Society on the eve of Monday's federal holiday marking King's birthday. The audience represented all races and ages, including children who sidled up to her for photos, peppering her with questions like, faced with the brutality, "Why didn't you fight back?"

She explained that they would have been killed if they did—unarmed, confronting "a sea of white men on foot and horseback," armed with rifles, bayonets, billy clubs and fierce dogs, plus tear gas.

"It was terrifying," she said.

A month earlier, activist Jimmie Lee Jackson was beaten and shot by a state trooper. His death inspired three marches from Selma to the state capital of Montgomery.

On Aug. 6, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law.

By the time she was 15,



Lowery had been jailed nine times.

But there were moments of comic relief.

Flashing a warm smile, she recounted how when she and her young friends

were released from the "sweatbox"—a windowless, sweltering hot cell—police asked them to sign their names for the record.

"We wrote, 'Mickey Mouse, Mini Mouse, Pluto'..." she said, grinning mischievously.

King is at the core of Lowery's memoir, titled "Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom." It was published in early January as Americans packed theaters to watch the film "Selma" about the early civil rights movement. The movie has been nominated for two Oscars, in the categories of best picture and best original song.

Lowery said she went to see it, but had to leave during the scene in which troopers and police attacked protesters at a march dubbed "Bloody Sunday" that preceded the famed, peaceful one to Montgomery on March 21, 1965. During the earlier march, authorities ordered several hundred marchers to stop at a bridge outside Selma. And when they quietly kept walking, the authorities viciously attacked.

"I just couldn't watch it," said Lowery.

After that day, she said she had to fight her fear to join the bigger march "because I was sure they would kill me."

An exhibit highlighting this transformational moment in American history is up through July at the New-York Historical Society.

Lowery, who lives in Selma, said that even today, "you have the ability to change something each day of your life."

'Selma' stars including Oprah march in Alabama, honoring MLK



AP
Oprah Winfrey locks arms with David Oyelowo, left, who portrays Martin Luther King Jr. in the movie "Selma," Ava DuVernay, the director of "Selma" and rapper Common, far left, as they march to the Edmund Pettus Bridge in honor of Martin Luther King Jr., Sunday, Jan. 18, 2015, in Selma, Ala.

SELMA, Ala. (AP)—Oprah Winfrey, fellow actors from the movie "Selma" and hundreds of others marched to recall one of the bloodiest chapters of the civil rights movement on Sunday, the eve of the national holiday honoring

ing Martin Luther King Jr.

The remembrance comes after several incidents in which unarmed black men were killed by police in recent months, spurring protests and heightening tensions around the country. In Ferguson,

Mo., where one fatal shooting caused weeks of violent protests, leading black members of Congress pressed for further reforms of the criminal justice system in the name of equality.

Eight members of the Con-

gressional Black Caucus joined U.S. Rep. William Lacy Clay at Wellspring United Methodist Church in Ferguson as they took up King's legacy in light of the recent deaths.

"We need to be outraged when local law enforcement and the justice system repeatedly allow young, unarmed black men to encounter police and then wind up dead with no consequences," said Clay, a St. Louis Democrat. "Not just in Ferguson, but over and over again across this country."

In Selma, Winfrey marched with "Selma" director Ava DuVernay, actor David Oyelowo, who portrayed King in the movie, and the rapper Common. Winfrey was a producer on the film and had an acting role like Common. They marched to Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge, where civil rights protesters were beaten and tear-gassed in 1965.

Asia

Pope leaves Manila after drawing record crowd of 6 million

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Pope Francis flew out of this Catholic bastion in Asia on Monday after a weeklong trip that included a visit to Sri Lanka and drew what Filipino officials says was a record crowd of 6 million faithful in a Manila park where he celebrated Mass.

President Benigno Aquino III, church leaders and 400 street children yelling “Pope Francis we love you,” saw him off at a Manila air base, where the pontiff, carrying a black travel bag, boarded a Philippine Airlines plane for a flight to Rome. Standing at the top of the stairs, the pope waved to the crowd, slightly bowed his head, then walked into the plane.

Hundreds of thousands of Filipinos lined Manila’s streets, with police keeping a close watch, to have their final glimpse of Francis, who smiled and waved aboard an open-sided, white popemobile.

“He’s my No. 1 world leader,” said Rita Fernandez, a 63-year-old mother of four, who stood on a street near the Apostolic Nunciature in Manila where Francis stayed during his four-day visit.

“He rides on a bus. He flew to Tacloban to visit the typhoon survivors despite the storm and he stops to talk to the poor. He’s a living saint,” said Fernandez,



AP
Pope Francis gestures before boarding his plane as he departs Manila, Philippines on Monday, Jan. 19, 2015.

the importance that the Vatican places on Asia as the future of the church since it’s one of the few places where Catholic numbers are growing—and on the Philippines as the largest Catholic nation in the region.

“We need to see each child as a gift to be welcomed, cherished and protected,” Francis said. “And we need to care for our young people, not allowing them to be robbed of hope and condemned to a life on the streets.”

Francis made a triumphant entry into Rizal Park, riding on a popemobile based on the design of a jeepney, the modified U.S. Army World War II jeep that is a common means of public transport here. He wore the same cheap, plastic yellow rain poncho handed out to the masses during his visit to the typhoon-hit eastern city of Tacloban a day earlier.

The crowd—a sea of humanity in colorful rain ponchos spread out across the 60 hectares (148 acres) of parkland and boulevards surrounding it—erupted in shrieks of joy when he drove by, a reflection of the incredible resonance Francis’ message about caring for society’s most marginal has had in a country where about a quarter of its 100 million people lives in poverty.

Francis dedicated his four-day trip to the Philippines to the poor and marginal. He denounced the corruption that has robbed them of a dignified life, visited with street children and traveled to Tacloban to offer prayers for survivors of Typhoon Haiyan, the deadly 2013 storm that devastated one of the Philippines’ poorest regions.

who held a cellphone with a camera and wore a yellow shirt showing a smiling Francis.

A crowd estimated at a record 6 million people by offi-

cials poured into Manila’s rain-soaked streets and its biggest park Sunday as Pope Francis ended his Asian pilgrimage with an appeal for Filipinos to protect

their young from sin and vice so they can become missionaries of the faith.

The crowd estimate, which could not be independently

verified, included people who attended the pope’s final Mass in Rizal Park and surrounding areas, and lined his motorcade route, said the chairman of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Francis Tolentino.

The Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, said the Vatican had received the figure officially from local authorities and that it was a record, surpassing the 5 million who turned out for St. John Paul II’s final Mass in the same park in 1995.

Francis dedicated the final homily of his Asia trip to children, given that the Mass fell on an important feast day honoring the infant Jesus. His focus was a reflection of

Indonesia rejects foreign appeals, executes 6 drug convicts

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesia brushed aside last-minute appeals by foreign leaders and executed by firing squad six people convicted of drug trafficking, including five foreigners, sending a message that the new government will not compromise its tough approach to narcotics.

Four men from Brazil, Malawi, Nigeria and the Netherlands and an Indonesian woman were shot to death simultaneously in pairs just after midnight Saturday, several kilometers (miles) from a high-security prison on Nusakambangan island. The

other, a woman from Vietnam, was executed in Boyolali, according to Attorney General Office’s spokesman Tony Spontana. Both areas are in Central Java province.

Their bodies were brought from the island by ambulances early Sunday either for burial or cremation, as requested by relatives and representatives of their embassies.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo in December rejected their clemency requests. He also refused a last-minute appeal by Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff and the Dutch gov-

ernment to spare their countrymen—Brazilian Marco Archer Cardoso Moreira, 53, and Ang Kiem Soe, 52, who was born in Papua but whose nationality is Dutch.

Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders said in a statement late Saturday that he had temporarily recalled the country’s ambassador to Indonesia and summoned Indonesia’s representative in The Hague to protest Ang’s execution. He said it was carried out despite King Willem-Alexander and Prime Minister Mark Rutte personally con-

tacting Widodo.

Koenders called the execution “a cruel and inhumane punishment ... an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity.”

Rousseff said she was outraged and appalled by the execution, according to a government statement.

The execution “creates a stain, a shadow in the bilateral relationship,” said Marco Aurelio Garcia, the Brazilian president’s foreign affairs special adviser. “There was no sensitivity on the part of the Indonesian government.”

Pakistani Muslims and Christians protest Charlie Hebdo

LAHORE, Pakistan (AP)—Different Pakistani political and religious groups protested for a fourth day Sunday against what they call blasphemous caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad in the French magazine Charlie Hebdo.

Protesters in multiple cities burned the French flag and an effigy of the French president, calling for the banning of the weekly satirical magazine. One protest paid tribute to the brothers who attacked the magazine’s offices.

The biggest protest took place in the eastern city of Lahore, where over 10,000 sup-

porters of the hard-line Jamaat-ud-Dawa organization chanted “Down with Charlie Hebdo” and “Death to blasphemers.”

Jamaat-ud-Dawa leader Hafiz Mohammad Saeed urged Muslim leaders to convince the United Nations to declare any form of blasphemy an international crime.

“If the United Nations doesn’t pay any heed to it, then Muslim states should form a United Nations of their own,” Saeed said.

Also in Lahore, a small group gathered in front of the Lahore Press Club to pay homage to the Kouachi brothers who at-

tacked the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris, killing 12 people. They offered funeral prayers for Cherif and Said Kouachi, and held up signs praising them.

“A strong message was needed and they delivered it. We salute the messengers...may they live long,” one sign read.

In Karachi, the main Jamaat-e-Islami party and cricket star turned politician Imran Khan’s Tehrik-e-Insaf party held protest rallies attended by hundreds.

About 1,200 supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami marched down a main street of the city where former JI chief Syed Munawar Hasan addressed them.

“Muslim masses are protesting over the blasphemous caricatures, but not the Muslim rulers and Muslim armies. They all should raise their voices over this act,” Hasan said.

About 200 supporters of Tehrik-e-Insaf attempted to reach the French consulate, but police blocked them. The protesters burned a portrait and an effigy of French president Francois Hollande.

In the northwestern city of Peshawar, dozens of Christian protesters held their own anti-Charlie Hebdo protest—burning the French flag and demanding the magazine be banned.

3 burned to death in Hindu-Muslim clash in India

PATNA, India (AP)—At least three Muslim villagers were burned to death Sunday when their thatched huts were set on fire during a clash between Hindu and Muslim groups in eastern India, a government official said.

Atul Prasad, a Bihar state administrator, said the violence erupted after the body of a young Hindu boy was found in Sarayan village more than a week after he went missing.

Prasad said Hindu fishermen blamed Muslims for killing the boy who was friendly with a Muslim girl from the

village, 105 kilometers (65 miles) north of Patna, the capital of Bihar state.

The charred bodies of three Muslims were found in the burned huts in the poor community, he said.

Police arrested eight Hindu men, and Prasad said the situation remains tense but under control in the village.

Hindus make up more than 80 percent and Muslims nearly 13 percent of India’s 1.2 billion people. They largely live peacefully in various parts of the country, but there is occasional violence.

World

Islamic State group releases 200 captive Yazidis in Iraq

ALTON KUPRI, Iraq (AP)—The Islamic State group released about 200 Yazidis held for five months in Iraq, mostly elderly, infirm captives who likely slowed the extremists down, Kurdish military officials said Sunday.

Almost all of the freed prisoners are in poor health and bore signs of abuse and neglect. Three were young children. The former captives were being questioned and receiving medical treatment on Sunday in the town of Alton Kupri.

Gen. Shirko Fatih, commander of Kurdish peshmerga forces in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, said it appears the militants released the prisoners because they were too much of a burden.

"It probably became too expensive to feed them and care for them," he said.

Tens of thousands of Yazidis fled in August when the Islamic State group captured the northern Iraqi town of Sinjar, near the Syrian border. But hundreds were taken captive by the group, with some Yazidi women forced into slavery, according to international rights groups and Iraqi officials.

The militants transported the mainly elderly captives from the northern town of Tal Afar and dropped them off Saturday at the Khazer Bridge, near the Kurdish regional capital of Erbil.

"Their situation is very bad, especially the psychological condition," said Hersh Hussein,



Two Yazidi boys, suffering from several infections from mosquito bites while held by the Islamic State group, wait with their mother inside a bus before being driven to the Kurdish city of Dohuk, in Alton Kupri, outside Kirkuk, Iraq, Sunday Jan. 18, 2015.

a representative from the Erbil governor's office who was in Alton Kupri. "Regarding other diseases we provide first aid and the most important medical treatment."

Maha Faris Qassem, 35, was released with her two young sons, both of whom were covered from head to toe in bug

bites which appear to be infected. She said the conditions of their captivity were so dire that infection was inevitable.

Relatives of the captives rejoiced upon hearing that their loved ones would return. Sofian Wahid, 22, was ecstatic when he learned that his 85-year-old grandmother had been freed.

"I spoke to her on the phone. She said: 'If you're happy, I'm happy.' I thank God on my knees she's back," he said by

phone from the northern town of Dohuk. He said the two would be reunited Monday.

"Some people said she was

killed or beheaded. I refused to believe that. Some girls who escaped from Daesh said they saw them, so that's when we kept hope she was still alive," he said, using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

About 50,000 Yazidis—half of them children, according to U.N. figures—fled to the mountains outside Sinjar during the onslaught. Some still remain there.

The U.S. launched airstrikes and humanitarian aid drops in Iraq on Aug. 8, partly in response to the crisis on Sinjar mountain. Since then, a coalition of eight countries have conducted more than 1,000 airstrikes across Iraq in an effort to eradicate the Islamic State group, which now holds a third of both Iraq and Syria.

The Sunni militant group views Yazidis and Shiite Muslims as apostates deserving of death, and has demanded Christians either convert to Islam or pay a special tax.

It was not immediately clear why the extremist group let the captives go rather than killing them. It was the first time a group of elderly were released from captivity, though many were spared death during the initial onslaught, often reporting they came face to face with the militants but were allowed to flee.

A year on, Islamic State group still rules Iraq's Fallujah

BAGHDAD (AP)—Nearly every night for a year, mortar and sniper fire from Islamic State group militants has pinned down outgunned Iraqi troops on the edge of Fallujah.

The city, the first to fall to the Sunni extremists a year ago this month, exemplifies the lack of progress in Iraq's war against the Islamic State group, which holds a third of the country. U.S.-led airstrikes and Iranian aid have helped Iraqi troops, militiamen and Kurdish fighters take back bits around Islamic State-held territory, but recapturing it all remains far out of reach.

"We are constantly on alert

and don't sleep very much," said Saad al-Sudani, an Iraqi soldier among the beleaguered troops outside of Fallujah. "We are waiting for any kind of support."

The fall of Fallujah in January 2014 started the Islamic State group's dramatic blitz across Iraq. In June, the extremists captured Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul, then swept south toward Baghdad in a march that put almost all the Sunni-majority regions of northern and western Iraq into its hands. The Iraqi military crumbled, with troops often dropping their weapons and fleeing.

A year later, the extremists still rule Fallujah, which saw some of the heaviest fighting of the U.S.-led war of 2003.

Gen. John Allen, the U.S. envoy to the anti-Islamic State coalition, said that advise-and-assist teams are working to train and equip 12 Iraqi brigades to prepare them for retaking Fallujah and Mosul.

"We expect that we'll see the effectiveness of this force improve over time and ultimately that they'll be able to take back the population centers and the municipalities," Allen told journalists Wednesday in Baghdad.

Israeli strikes kill 6 Hezbollah fighters in Syria

BEIRUT (AP)—An Israeli strike in Syria on Sunday killed the son of a slain top Hezbollah commander and at least five other fighters in a move that could ratchet up tensions with the powerful Lebanese Shiite movement, which recently boasted of rockets that can hit any part of the Jewish state.

Hezbollah militants in towns and villages along the border with Israel went on high alert,

said an official from the group. In the Shiite-dominated areas of south Lebanon and Beirut, the streets emptied quickly as residents feared an escalation. Hezbollah-run al-Manar TV warned that Israel was "playing with fire that puts the security of the whole Middle East on edge."

In a statement issued to the media, Hezbollah identified one of the six slain men as Jihad Mughniyeh, the son of

Imad Mughniyeh, a top Hezbollah operative assassinated in 2008 in Damascus. Hezbollah blames Israel for the killing and has long vowed to avenge his death.

The younger Mughniyeh is one of the most prominent Hezbollah officials to die in Syria since the group entered the fray in 2012, fighting alongside President Bashar Assad's forces against the Sunni-led rebellion.

Police release 3 suspects arrested in French terror probe

PARIS (AP)—French police have released three female suspects from questioning, but will keep nine other people in custody as part of an anti-terror investigation connected to last week's attacks in Paris that have put Europe on high alert, officials said Sunday.

Amid the heightened European vigilance, a far-right rally in Germany planned for Monday was cancelled over a terrorism threat, Italy said it had expelled nine suspected jihadists since late December and Britain's home secretary called for new action to fight anti-Semitism in the wake of the Paris attacks.

Authorities in Belgium, meanwhile, asked Greek counterparts to extradite a man detained in Greece a day earlier in connection with a probe of a suspected plot to kill police in Belgium. On Thursday, Belgian police led a vast anti-terrorism sweep in and around Brussels and in eastern Verviers, which left two suspects dead. Authorities cited an imminent threat.

Police in at least four European countries arrested dozens of suspects in recent days in an anti-terrorism crackdown sparked by last week's bloody rampage in

France after Charlie Hebdo

In a recent YouGov poll, French adults were asked if they agree or disagree with the following statements

Freedom of the press is a fundamental freedom of the French Republic and must be defended at all costs.

■ Agree ■ Disagree
■ Don't know

89%

7%

5%

In order to preserve the freedom for all, it is sometimes necessary to take measures that restrict individual liberties.

51%

36%

13%

I'm prepared to see my own freedom reduced if it can benefit the public interest.

43%

44%

12%

Source: yougov.com
Graphic: Greg Good, TNS

and around Paris. Brothers Said and Cherif Kouachi and their friend, Amedy Coulibaly, killed 17 people at the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo, a kosher grocery and elsewhere.

In Paris, prosecutor's office spokesman Denis Fauriat said nine suspects among a total 12 rounded up on Friday were facing extended interrogations for the next two days, a step allowed under tough French anti-terror laws enacted largely after bombings and other terrorism years ago in France.

The nine—eight men and a woman—were being held in a probe centering on possible logistical support given to Coulibaly. Belgian authorities say there was no apparent link between the foiled plot in Belgium and the terror attacks in Paris.

Fallout from the Paris attacks has spread. Demonstrations in support of the slain Charlie Hebdo journalists have been held in countries from the United States to Brazil, and violent protests against the magazine's depictions of the Prophet Muhammad have taken place in Niger, Pakistan and Algeria—countries with large Muslim populations.

Focus

Why US inflation stays ultra-low while job growth is surging



AP
In this June 15, 2011 file photo, job seekers wait in a line at a job fair in Southfield, Mich.

By JOSH BOAK and
CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP ECONOMICS WRITERS

WASHINGTON (AP)—This isn't explained in Econ 101.

Month after month, U.S. hiring keeps rising, and unemployment keeps falling. Eventually, pay and inflation are supposed to start surging in response.

They're not happening.

Last month, employers added a healthy 252,000 jobs—ending the best year of hiring since 1999—and the unemployment rate sank to 5.6 percent from 5.8 percent. Yet inflation isn't managing to reach even the Federal Reserve's 2 percent target rate. And paychecks are barely budging. In December, average hourly pay actually fell.

Economists are struggling to explain the phenomenon.

"I can't find a plausible empirical or theoretical explanation for why hourly wages would drop when for nine months we've been adding jobs at a robust pace," said Patrick O'Keefe, chief economist at consulting firm CohnReznick.

Normally, with unemployment this low, the Fed would raise its benchmark interest rate to prevent inflation from spiking and the economy from overheating. Not this time. Though the Fed's record-low rates have helped support the economy since the 2008 financial crisis, those low rates haven't met their other goal of raising wages and

inflation to normal levels.

As long as inflation stays consistently below its target, the Fed might feel pressure to delay a rate increase beyond midyear, when most economists have predicted a hike. Thanks in part to plunging oil prices, many economists now envision even less inflation this year than in 2014.

When the U.S. economy last enjoyed a similar hiring binge, in 1999, average wages climbed 3.6 percent, compared with 1.6 percent last year, according to the government.

So what explains consistently solid job growth without inflation? Here are four crucial factors:

RECESSION'S LINGERING DAMAGE

Though the unemployment rate is back to a nearly healthy level, many other measures of the job market remain subpar.

There are still 6.8 million people working part time who can't find full-time jobs, up from 4.1 million before the recession. Each of those workers potentially competes with the unemployed for full-time work, thereby holding down wages.

And there are 2.3 million people who have recently stopped looking for work, some of them because they grew discouraged about their prospects. Others chose to return to school or to care for relatives. That's up from 1.3 million before the recession.

And a broader gauge of unemployment, which includes the

officially unemployed as well as involuntary part-time workers and those who've stopped looking, is 11.1 percent. That figure has improved since the recession, but not as much as the official unemployment rate has.

Jennifer Durham, a vice president at the 800-fast-food restaurant chain Checkers, says it plans to add 50 to 60 restaurants this year. Each should employ 25 to 30 people.

But Checkers hasn't faced much pressure to raise wages for hourly workers. "There's no shortage of applicants," Durham said.

The end of long-term unemployment benefits, which provided up to 99 weeks of aid until they expired a year ago, may also be contributing to lower wages, said Daniel Alpert, managing director at Westwood Capital, said.

That's because some of the unemployed have likely had to take lower-paying jobs. Retail or restaurant jobs that pay at or near minimum wage don't provide much more spending power than unemployment benefits did, Alpert added. That means the new jobs won't raise inflation much if workers can't afford to spend much more than they did when they were unemployed.

BLAME THE ROBOTS

What's happened in the auto industry reveals much about how the economy has been transformed—and why a nearly nor-

mal 5.6 percent unemployment isn't igniting wages.

Sales of new cars last year reached 16.5 million, the best performance since 2006. But the gains have yet to restore every auto job lost to the recession—let alone expand the industry's employment over the past eight years. The number of autoworkers remains about 160,000 shy of pre-recession levels of more than 1 million.

The reason: Companies fear returning to the days when they had too much factory capacity. So they're squeezing more production out of less capacity. Emerging from the recession, automakers reconfigured factory floors and added robots to produce more vehicles from fewer plants and fewer workers.

What's more, the United Auto Workers union agreed to wage cuts in an effort to help General Motors, Ford and Chrysler. New hires started at around \$16 an hour, about half of what longtime workers earn.

Roughly a quarter of Detroit's factory workers now make the entry-level wage. Even longtime UAW workers haven't had an hourly pay raise since 2007, though they've received annual profit-sharing checks equaling about \$4 an hour.

Similar trends have emerged at other factories and in other industries. O'Keefe notes, for example, that retailers are selling more goods than before the recession yet still employ fewer workers.

Though hiring has picked up in higher-paying industries, in many cases, wages are still lagging. Average pay at heavy goods manufacturers rose only 0.7 percent last year, less than half the economy-wide average. Pay for transportation and warehousing workers rose just 0.9 percent.

CHECK THE DEMOGRAPHICS

Seen more Uber-riding, Snapchatting millennials?

Since the start of graduation season in May, employers have hired an additional 1.67 million college graduates—nearly 60 percent of all jobs added last year. In the past year, the number of 25-to-34 year-olds with jobs has climbed a solid 2.5 percent.

Because so much hiring has disproportionately occurred in recent months, Wells Fargo chief economist John Silvia figures that wages might be held down because many lower-paid entry-level workers are finding jobs. Their influx cuts into average wages while simultaneously reflecting the strength of job growth.

"Given that we've hired so many people in the last two or three months, you're bringing in a lot of new workers who will not be paid as well as experienced workers," Silvia said.

Dig a bit deeper and you find other age-based pressures: The number of workers older than 55 climbed an impressive 3.4

percent last year. But those employees likely maxed out their salary potential years ago and are unlikely to enjoy sharp pay hikes. The number of employed 35-to-54-year-olds—the age group most likely to be in their peak earnings period—rose less than 1 percentage point in the past year.

GLOBAL REALITY BITES

No matter how much the U.S. economy improves, American workers still face competition from billions of workers in China, India, Eastern Europe and elsewhere who weren't part of the global economy a decade or two ago.

That most of those economies, as well as Japan and the rest of Europe, are stumbling only intensifies the competition for jobs. Weak growth overseas has lowered interest rates and inflation—and therefore tempered pay growth—in many of the United States' competitors. That means U.S. workers face continued low-wage competition.

At the same time, the dollar's value is rising against other currencies, thereby making U.S. goods costlier overseas. This limits the ability of U.S. workers to secure higher pay. Many U.S. companies can move operations overseas.

O'Keefe notes that this trend increasingly hurts skilled U.S. service workers. Software engineers, legal researchers and IT help desk workers all compete with lower-paid workers overseas.

Acura's RDX crossover has V-6 power

By G. CHAMBERS WILLIAMS III
FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

Now in its third year since a complete redesign, the 2015 Acura RDX compact crossover continues as an upscale family hauler that's not much more expensive than some non-premium competitors.

Acura aimed the RDX at young professional couples with no kids, and also at empty-nester baby boomers looking to downsize a bit from the bigger SUVs they needed when all the kids were at home.

For 2015, RDX prices begin at \$34,895 (plus \$895 freight) for the front-wheel-drive version, and \$36,295 with all-wheel drive. With the Technology package, the front-drive model is \$38,595, and the all-wheel-drive \$39,995.

The RDX is in the entry-premium SUV segment, competing against vehicles such as the Audi Q5, BMW X3, Infiniti QX50, Mercedes-Benz GLK350, Volkswagen Tiguan and Volvo XC60.

Even with gasoline prices down dramatically in recent weeks, sales of these compact crossovers, including premium models, are still climbing as consumers look for smaller vehicles with better fuel economy. Buyers in this class are looking for more of everything, including fuel economy, luxury and performance—but in smaller packages.

Introduced originally for 2007, the five-passenger RDX is based on the architecture of Honda's popular CR-V compact crossover, which got its own slight makeover for 2015.

The RDX's biggest difference from the CR-V is under the hood. While the Honda comes with a four-cylinder engine, the RDX is offered only with a pleasingly peppy V-6. Gone is the previous model's turbo-charged four-cylinder, but fuel economy was increased from the previous generation.

For 2015, the front-drive model has EPA ratings of 20 mpg city/28 highway/23 combined; with all-wheel drive, the numbers are 19/27/22.

The 3.5-liter engine is rated at 273 horsepower and 251 foot-pounds of torque, and is paired with a six-speed automatic transmission with manual-shift feature, activated by paddles behind each side of the steering wheel.

This RDX has a much more luxurious interior than that of

NUTS & BOLTS

2015 Acura RDX

- **The package:** Premium, compact, five-passenger, five-door, V-6 powered, front- or all-wheel-drive crossover utility vehicle.
- **Engines:** 3.5-liter V-6.
- **Transmission:** Six-speed automatic.
- **Power/torque:** 273 horsepower/251 pound-feet
- **Brakes, front/rear:** Disc/disc, antilock.
- **Length:** 183.5 inches.
- **Curb weight (range):** 3,717-3,852 pounds.
- **Towing capacity:** 1,500 pounds.
- **Electronic stability control:** Standard, with traction control.
- **Side air bags:** Front seat-mounted; roof-mounted side-curtain for both rows.
- **EPA fuel economy:** 20 mpg city/28 highway/23 combined (front drive); 19/27/22 (all-wheel drive).
- **Base price range:** \$34,895-\$39,995, plus \$895 freight.
- **Price as tested:** \$40,890, including freight (all-wheel drive model with Technology Package).
- **On the Road rating:** 9.2 (of a possible 10).

the CR-V, with standard leather upholstery and other amenities that clearly put the vehicle in the premium class. The cabin also is much quieter than before, thanks to better insulation and Active Noise Control technology—similar to those noise-cancelling headphones people wear on airplanes.

The vehicle also has larger door openings, more passenger and cargo space, and new features such as an optional power-operated tailgate, which makes it much easier to open and close when your hands are full.

As with most vehicles Honda aims at families, the RDX has lots of interior conveniences that make trips easy on everyone.

The RDX's ride is softer than that of the previous model, but the tradeoff is that this one doesn't handle as crisply. It's meant more for comfort than performance, which is what most buyers probably are looking for in this class.

Still, it's a very good vehicle that does what it's intended to do: haul people and kids around in comfort, in a smaller, more-fuel-efficient package that's easy to negotiate through traffic and crowded mall parking lots.

Overdrive



2015 Acura RDX.
MCT

In Celebration of his new life †Eulogio Manalo King *Lovingly known as "Eloy"*

Born to life on January 23, 1963 and was called to Eternal rest on January 14, 2015

In His new life, He now joins His:

Father: †Esteban C. Borja
Mother: †Maria Manalo King
Parents-In-Law: †Santiago Acosta Camacho
†Carmen Sablan Dela Cruz Camacho

His memories will forever live in the hearts of His:

Wife: Lydia Dela Cruz Camacho King

Children and Grandchildren: Santiago John & Jocelyn King and Children
Eulogio C. King, Jr.
Patrick Jake C. King
Vincent George C. King & Isha Adhitari and family
Carmen Maria C. King

Brothers, Sisters and In-Laws of †Eloy:

†Oscar M. King - family, Rita K. & †Paulino SN. Manglona and family, Steven M. & †Emiliana SN. King and family, Juanis M. & †Ermelunda B. King and family, Vicente M. & Martina E. King and family, Cristina K. & Jeus T. Cabrera and family, Magdalena K. & Romulu B. Misola and family, Rosalie K. & Louisito D. Bautista and family, Alexandro M. & Lilia M. King and family, Thomas M. & Karen King and family, Juan M. King and children, †Rudolfo M. King & Angie C. Atalig and family

†Alicia & Miguel Evangelista and family, Dolores Chargualaf and family, Victor & Eloise Borja and family, Esteban & Corazon Borja and children, Arsene & Diana Borja and family, Raymond & Bertha Borja and family, Gilbert & Chona Borja and family, †Clarence Borja, Jasper Borja & Lisa Aguon and family, Clarence & Brookyn Borja and family, Lisa Borja & Godfrey Mendiola and family

Brothers-In-Law and Sisters-In-Law of †Eloy:

Gabriel DLC. & Frances T. Camacho and family, †Joseph DLC. & Martha C. Camacho and family, Francisco DLC. Camacho & Mazie SN. Taitano and family, Patricia C. & Jose P. Villagomez and family, Edward DLC. & Elizabeth G. Camacho and family, Martin DLC. & Raynita L. Camacho and family, Ricardo DLC. & Cynthia R. Camacho and family, Ruth C. & Steven M. Pangelinan and family, Gernadine DLC. Camacho & Norbert O. Mettao

Mass of Intentions are being celebrated daily at 6:00am at Kristo Rai Church and Mount Carmel Cathedral and also at San Jose Church in Tinian at 6:00am. Holy Rosary is being prayed nightly at 7:00pm at San Jose Church, Tinian.

Funeral Services will be held on Saturday, January 31, 2015. His remains will be escorted from Tinian Health Center to San Jose Church at 7:30am. Responso Service will be at 8:20am followed by Holy Rosary at 8:30am. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00am followed by Interment Services at Tinian Cemetery.

Please join us in prayers,

Thank you and Si Yu'us Ma'ase

Lydia Camacho King, Children and Families

St. Peregrine, Patron of Cancer Patients – Pray For Us



Life & Style

'American Sniper' screenwriter Jason Hall: His aim was truth

By COLIN COVERT
STAR TRIBUNE (MINNEAPOLIS)

Jason Hall's screenplay for "American Sniper" earned him an Oscar nomination Thursday. It's not simply a look at the experiences of Chris Kyle, the Navy SEAL considered the most lethal sniper in U.S. military history, he said in a recent phone call. It's an attempt to describe war "in a way that it hadn't been portrayed before."

Hall began the project in 2010 before the marksman's memoir "American Sniper" was published, basing his early script on Kyle's early drafts of the book and many interviews.

"I heard of some of his accomplishments over there. I heard of the 2,100-yard shot" in which he killed an insurgent aiming a rocket at a U.S. convoy.

Hall traveled to Texas after Kyle's four tours in Iraq to meet him and understand who he was, why he did what he did and how it affected him.

Early on he felt that Kyle carried "a sense of turmoil. I looked in his eyes and shook his hand and it seemed to cost him dearly. He didn't feel like he was home to me." Meeting Kyle's wife made Hall feel "she also did four tours staying home and raising these kids. I felt that in that relationship was

AP
In this image released by Warner Bros. Pictures, Bradley Cooper appears in a scene from "American Sniper."

a story that I hadn't seen before. How had they survived that 10 years and stayed married" when the divorce rate among Navy SEALs is over 90 percent.

Then in 2013 Kyle was killed by a troubled former Marine he was trying to help at a gun range. "I turned in the script and the next day he was murdered," Hall said.

For him, Kyle's life story was not ending but beginning again. He dug deeper, interviewing Kyle's widow for hundreds of hours, understanding him in a way he had not grasped before. His new script revealed who Kyle was before the war, his emotional sacrifice in battle and what he lost.

"The difficulty he had transitioning back and forth from civilian life to [the war zone] was profound, something I hadn't seen in other films. I realized early on that whatever problems we had with this war, whatever decision we made about it, [the soldiers] had made a much harder decision. Their decisions affected the rest of their lives. It was a moral dilemma that would forever alter Chris' life."



Hall estimates that less than half the film is based directly on Kyle's book. One chapter that was not brought to screen concerned former Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura, who sued Kyle's estate for defamation after Kyle's book said he beat a man (later identified as Ventura) for insulting SEALs. In a court settlement Ventura was awarded \$1.8 million.

"In the book you come away with the sense that [Kyle was] this jaded character who's a true patriot but also had a real chip on his shoulder. The reality of Chris was something different. All these guys go out, have one too many, end up getting in a bar fight and high-tail it out of there. It wasn't something that defined Chris and it's unfortunate that it's been dwelled on as much as

it has. You know, certain people are willing to do anything they can to win a lawsuit and—well,

I'll just leave it at that. Or I might find myself getting sued alongside him."

'American Sniper' scores huge at box office

LOS ANGELES (Los Angeles Times)—Clint Eastwood's "American Sniper" has already surpassed tracking expectations for the holiday weekend, pulling in a projected \$90.2 million in the U.S. and Canada from Friday through Sunday.

The war drama is poised to add about \$15 million Monday, raising its total since its limited Christmas Day release to \$108.6 million. It is the biggest wide release opening for Eastwood to date.

According to research firm Rentrak, if estimates hold, this will be a record Martin Luther King Jr. weekend at the box office, with an overall projected gross of \$240 million through Monday. Year-to-date, the box

office is up about 3 percent.

"American Sniper," which cost Warner Bros. and Village Roadshow about \$58 million to make, is adapted from the Chris Kyle autobiography of the same name. It follows the story of Kyle (Bradley Cooper), a Navy SEAL known as the most lethal sniper in American history.

"Sniper" enjoyed a 14 percent uptick on Saturday, suggesting it benefited from positive word of mouth. The film also enjoyed some fresh awards buzz. It was nominated for six Academy Awards on Thursday, including best motion picture and lead actor (Cooper). Eastwood also scored a nomination for the Directors Guild of America award for directorial achievement in a

feature film.

The movie received a 73 percent positive rating from critic site Rotten Tomatoes and an A-plus grade from audience polling firm CinemaScore.

Sony's comedy "The Wedding Ringer" was in second place for the weekend, meeting studio projections with an estimated \$21 million. It is projected to add \$4 million to that amount by the end of the four-day weekend.

The film follows Doug Harris (Josh Gad), a lovable but awkward groom-to-be without a best man. He hires Jimmy Callahan (Kevin Hart), whose company provides a flattering best man for the guy in need.

With no other family films in

the mix, "Paddington," released by Weinstein Co., rounded out the top three with \$19.3 million.

"Taken 3," last week's box-office winner, was in fourth place and added about \$14.1 million in the Friday-Sunday period. The Liam Neeson film has made about \$62.8 million to date.

Paramount Pictures' "Selma" added \$8.3 million in the three-day span, making it fifth overall. It has pulled in about \$26 million since its limited Christmas Day release.

Fellow box office newcomer "Blackhat" debuted at No. 10 with a paltry \$4 million. Universal Pictures released the Legendary action-thriller, which is directed by Michael Mann and stars Chris Hemsworth.

Publisher seeks 'understanding' of facts in North Korea book

NEW YORK (AP)—The publisher of an authorized best-seller about North Korean defector and human rights activist Shin Dong-hyuk, who has retracted substantial parts of his story, said Sunday that it is anxious for an "accurate understanding" of the facts.

Penguin Books publicity director Louise Braverman said in a statement that the publisher was consulting with Blaine

Harden, whose "Escape from Camp 14" came out in 2012.

Viking, a Penguin imprint, "has been apprised that there were some inaccuracies in the story Shin Dong-hyuk, the subject of the book, told the author," the statement reads. "We are working with the author on an



Shin Dong-hyuk

accurate understanding of the facts."

Harden's book spent several weeks on The New York Times hardcover and paperback best-seller lists, and, according to Braverman, has been published in 27 languages. More than 200,000 copies are in print in the U.S. alone.

According to Harden, a for-

mer Washington Post reporter, Shin has acknowledged to him that he changed some key details and had apologized.

"In light of my conversation with Shin," Harden wrote on his web site. "I am working with my publisher to gather more information and amend the book."

Publishers rarely fact check books, citing time and expense, and instead rely on the authors.

Despite outside protests, Cosby welcomed by Denver audience

DENVER (AP)—Bill Cosby performed to a welcoming Denver audience, despite a protest by some 100 people chanting "Rape is not a joke!" and "No means no!" outside the theater.

The first of Cosby's two performances Saturday came after a woman held an afternoon news conference at a nearby hotel to accuse him of sexually assaulting her in 1986.

Beth Ferrier said during the gathering called by Los Angeles attorney Gloria Allred that Cosby put drugs in her coffee when she went to see one of his shows in Denver.

"I cannot tell you how horrific of a feeling that is," she said, adding that the next thing she remembered was waking up hours later in the back of her car "practically naked."

Ferrier, 55, has said previously she was assaulted by Cosby. She went public on June 23, 2005, alleging that as a model visiting New York in the early 1980s, she met Cosby and they had a brief affair.

The 77-year-old comedian is facing sexual assault accusations from at least 15 women, with some of the claims dating back decades. He has denied the allegations through his attorney and has never been charged with a crime. A statement from Cosby's publicist was not immediately available

Saturday night.

Cosby was welcomed to the stage during his first show with a standing ovation and hoots of "We love you Bill!" He did not make any reference to the allegations during the two-hour-long show.

Longtime Cosby fan Robert Belveal, 48, of Denver, said the protesters outside did nothing to deter him from attending.

"I believe that if you're not convicted of a crime, then why should you be judged? All it takes is for one person to say something, then you have all these other people wanting to get their 15 minutes of fame," he said of Cosby's accusers.

The Denver Post reported that the entertainer also received a standing ovation at his second show.

On Friday, Cosby performed at a packed show in Pueblo. About 25 demonstrators gathered outside, chanting "no means no" and "Colorado believes the women."

But inside the venue, the crowd warmly welcomed Cosby. Making his first appearance in Pueblo since a 1996 show at the Colorado State Fair, he was embraced by a mostly middle-aged and older crowd.

On Thursday, Cosby released a statement thanking his fans and saying he's ready to perform in Colorado.

Viva Mariah! Mariah Carey announces Las Vegas residency

By **GERRICK D. KENNEDY**
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Mariah Carey is coming to Las Vegas.

The singer has announced a headlining residency at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace. Carey's production will launch in May, according to Caesars

Entertainment.

Inspired by her greatest hits album, "Number 1's," the show will package all the pop diva's smash hits—all 18 No. 1s are included—along with fan favorites and songs she has yet to perform live.

"I have so many ideas for the show that I'm currently work-

ing on and am excited to perform all of my No. 1 singles together for the first time and others that are very close to my heart," Carey said in a statement on Thursday. "My songs are the soundtrack of my life and I can't wait to share them with my fans on stage."

To coincide with the new

show, Carey will reissue her hits compilation.

The reworked edition will include the No. 1s she has amassed since the set was released in 1998—"We Belong Together" and "Touch My Body" among them—along with new music. Carey plans on releasing the album later this year.

Rumors recently surfaced that Carey was among the names being courted by Caesars to fill in for Celine Dion, who is taking a leave from her massive production to care for

her ailing husband.

The news of a Vegas show comes at a strange time for the "All I Want for Christmas Is You" singer.

Carey's live offerings, especially as of late, have been incredibly shaky. Her vocal performances on a recent Asian leg of her tour were heavily scrutinized and her showing on the "Christmas in Rockefeller Center" special went viral for all the wrong reasons.

And then there's the music. Her last album, "Me. I am

Mariah ... the Elusive Chan-teuse," was hampered by numerous stalled singles and delays and ultimately opened with weak sales.

But the show could reinvigorate the singer's brand. Her shows are often over-the-top—in a great way—and Vegas is the perfect stage for a performer who has perfected glitz and glamour.

Carey will make her Vegas debut May 6. Dates for the first 18 shows have been announced and are currently on sale.



In this Dec. 3, 2014 file photo, Mariah Carey performs at the 82nd Annual Rockefeller Center Christmas tree lighting ceremony in New York.

FX orders pilot with Adlon of 'Louie'

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Pamela Adlon, a co-star with Louis C.K. on the FX comedy "Louie," will be getting a show of her own.

FX announced on Sunday that it has ordered a pilot for

"Better Things," a comedy that stars Adlon as a single mother with three girls. Adlon and Louis C.K. are writing the pilot and will be executive producers.

Adlon has been nominated

for two Emmy awards for her work on "Louie."

FX also said on Sunday that "The Comedians," a comedy starring Billy Crystal and Josh Gad, will begin airing in April.

'Grown Ups' actor arrested for investigation of DUI

BURBANK, Calif. (AP)—Police say an 18-year-old actor has been arrested for investigation of driving under the influence of marijuana.

Burbank Police Sgt. Scott Meadows said Sunday that

Nadji Jeter was pulled over shortly after 7 p.m. Saturday for an alleged traffic violation and was later arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence.

Meadows says Jeter was released after he was sober with a

misdemeanor citation.

Jeter is known for playing the role of Andres McKenzie, the son of Chris Rock's character, in the movie "Grown Ups." He has also made appearances on television sitcoms.

Actor-comedian Stephen Fry weds partner

LONDON (AP)—Actor-comedian Stephen Fry has married partner Elliott G. Spencer in eastern England.

The 57-year-old Fry sent a tweet to his 8 million followers on Saturday, announcing that he had tied the knot.

"Gosh. (at)ElliottGSpencer and I go into a room as two people, sign a book and leave as one," Fry says on his Twitter feed. "Amazing."

Well-wishers tweeted their congratulations on Sunday.

Fry announced his plans earlier this month to wed 27-year-old Spencer at the register office in Dereham, eastern England.

One of Britain's best known presenters, Fry first gained fame



British comedian and actor Stephen Fry poses for photographs with a BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) statuette during a photocall to mark the announcement of the BAFTA award nominations in London, Friday, Jan. 9, 2015.

in the 1980s in a comedy duo with Hugh Laurie. He also writ-

ten novels and appeared in the film, "The Hobbit."

Fitness model struck and killed by train in California

BURBANK, Calif. (AP)—A 37-year-old model and actor featured on the cover of numerous fitness magazines was struck and killed by a train while filming on the tracks in Southern California, authorities said.

Two men were filming George Plitt Jr. on the railroad track north of the Burbank train station Saturday afternoon when Plitt was hit by a southbound Metrolink train, said Burbank Police Sgt. Scott Meadows.

Investigators, who interviewed witnesses who saw Plitt standing on the track even as the train's horn was blaring, have ruled out a suicide, he said.

It appears Plitt may have believed the train was on a nearby, parallel track, Meadows said.

"It's like a blind turn," he said. "When the train came, you might not be able to tell which set the train is on."

It was not immediately clear what the men were filming. Investigators are trying to determine who directed the men to

film on the railroad track.

Plitt also went by the name Greg and was a well-known fitness model, he said.

The actor and West Point graduate has appeared on more than 200 magazine covers, Bravo's reality television show "Work Out" and NBC's daytime soap opera "Days of Our Lives," according to a website in Plitt's name.

Plitt was born in Baltimore. He served five years in the Army after graduating from West Point, the website said.

Gay grandma is unhappy being shielded from son's kids

DEAR ABBY: I came out of the closet when my son was 4. I thought I had taught him not to judge because of a label. He's now 30, with a wife and two adorable children who own my heart.

When my granddaughter was born, my partner and I were at the hospital and have visited with them often and they with us. However, after my grandson was born last year, my son quit speaking to me.

I have asked him numerous times what the issue is. His response is: "I have to protect my children from people who are gay. I don't want them to know anyone who is gay." His wife and her family are very religious, and I feel this is the real reason. What can I do?

HEARTBROKEN GAY GRANNY

DEAR HEARTBROKEN: If your son is under the mistaken impression that he is going to somehow "protect" his children by isolating them from gay people, he must be living in an alternate reality. Does he also plan to emigrate to the moon?

I suspect you have put your finger squarely on the reason why your son is now ostracizing you. His wife appears to wield the power in that family, and could benefit by learning more about homosexuality AND her religion, which I assume preaches love and tolerance for one's fellow man rather than

judgment and exclusion.

You can't force your son and his wife to have contact with you if they don't want to. Leave open the possibility that they may, over time, reconcile their love for you with their faith.

For your own emotional well-being, it's important you find other outlets for your maternal instincts and go on with your life because any child would be blessed to be a part of it. Sadly, a large number of LGBT young people are rejected by their parents when they come out. These kids would benefit greatly from having a positive adult mentor like you. This could be your golden opportunity to make a significant, positive difference in someone's life. Contact Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays at pflag.org to find out how to get involved.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend is a widower. We have been dating for more than a year. He has his house and I have mine.

I just found out that we are sleeping in the bed his late wife died in. (She died in her sleep.) I had assumed that he had taken care of all that stuff because her clothes and other personal effects are gone.

How do I suggest we get another bed at his place? I try to have him come to my home as often as I can. But there are still times we

DEAR ABBY

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



end up at his house, and it's creepy.

SLEEPING POORLY IN FLORIDA

DEAR SLEEPING POORLY: I agree. Tell him how you feel and suggest the two of you select a new mattress for his bed together. You have been a couple long enough that you should be able to speak frankly with him. And he has enough time invested in you that he should be willing.

■■■

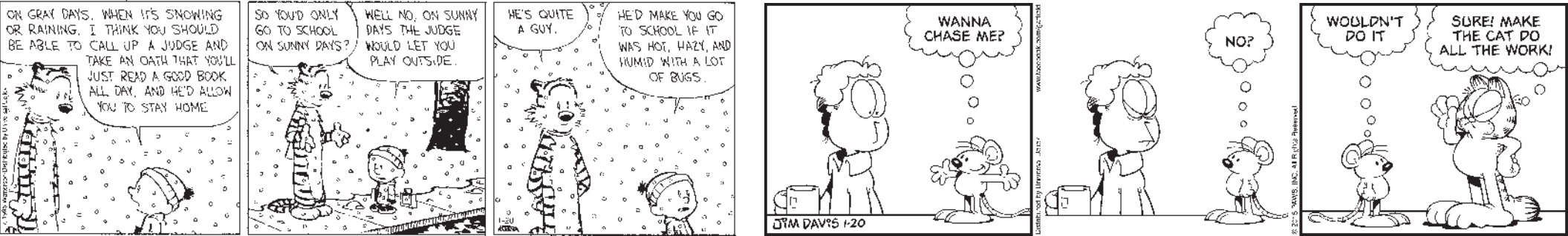
What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

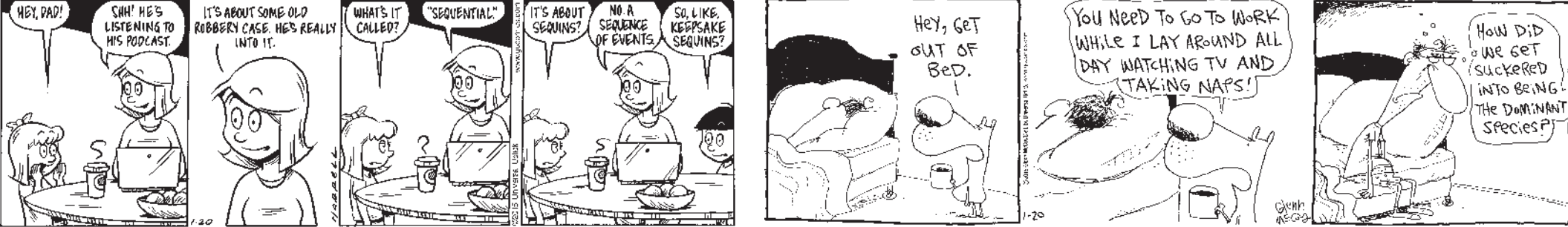
Garfield® By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Liniment target

5 Poorly lit

8 "Big Brother" host Julie

12 Spinning sound

13 Alias abbr.

14 Present

15 Developed flexibility

17 Plankton piece

18 Squid squirt

19 Tyrant

21 For all to hear

24 Limbs

25 Fishing bait, often

26 Hung on

30 Calendar abbr.

31 Flood preventives

32 Praise in verse

33 Paid attention

35 Thailand, once

36 Basic lessons

37 Tranquilizes

38 Without delay

41 Rotation duration

42 "— Lang Syne"

43 Put on a pedestal

48 Capri, e.g.

49 Zero

50 Taboo action

51 Paper quantity

52 Perch

53 "Holy cow!"

2 Greek consonant

3 That guy

4 Element no. 68

5 Unlit

6 Eisenhower

7 Enraged

8 Sliding dance

9 Aid

10 Therefore

11 Clean

16 Conclude

20 Mayonnaise ingredients

22 Places

23 Table scraps

24 Enjoys

26 Navigator and Mark LT, e.g.

27 Stir up

28 Dutch cheese

29 Reps.' rivals

31 Credit card result

34 Type of bike

35 Adage

37 Sardine container

38 Two-some

39 Stratagem

40 — podrida

41 Luminox

44 Mid-afternoon, in a way

45 Menagerie

46 Type measures

47 Homer's interjection

Solution time: 22 mins.

Yesterdays answer 1-20

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Stacey Dash, 48; Rainn Wilson, 49; Bill Maher, 59; David Lynch, 69.

Happy Birthday: Take care of responsibilities and prepare to move forward. Living in the past or harboring regrets will hold you back. Forge ahead with optimism and the intent to give your all and reach your goals. Don't let what others do cost you. Look at the big picture and take care of what's most important to you. Your numbers are 6, 13, 21, 27, 33, 39, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Participate and give back to your community or someone who has been there for you in the past. You will attract the attention of someone who can and will benefit you in the future. Love and commitment are heading in your direction. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): When dealing with time or money management, you will be at a loss. Put your energy into something that will help you get ahead. Try to learn more and be positive about new developments. Choose quality over quantity. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Consider your options and it will become clear what you should do next. Follow your heart and assess what needs to be changed in your life to make things better. Study, travel, love or doing your own thing will bring positive results. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Concentrate on financial deals or adding value to something you already own. Don't

be afraid to take a unique journey to reach your destination. Changing your attitude or beliefs is likely and will bring interesting results. ★★★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't let others annoy you. Time is precious, and you can accomplish plenty if you focus on what's important to you. Think big and work in conjunction with people who are intent on reaching similar goals. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Step up and share your unique plans with others. A change in the way you live may be necessary in order to follow your dreams. Get together with people who are heading in the same direction as you. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't worry about what others do or say. Stand up and be counted and you will make a difference. Your participation in various affairs will show others you are not one to push around. Love and romance will bring about a positive lifestyle change. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't overlook fine but important details that can affect an important relationship. Let your intuition guide you when it comes to matters of a personal nature. Communicate from the heart and you will come out on top. ★★★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Take on more if it will allow you to show your finer attributes. A chance to impress someone who may be able to help you reach your goals will present itself. An idea you have will bring in extra cash. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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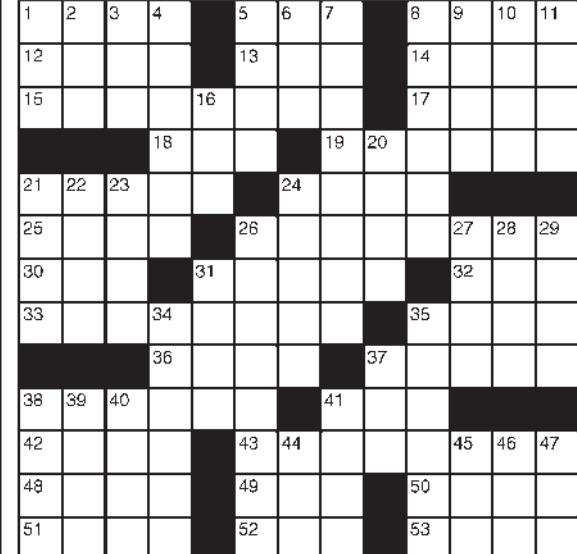
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Emotional matters will set you back mentally, physically or financially if you don't take control and put your plans in motion before it's too late. You don't have to follow the crowd, and you shouldn't pay for others' mistakes. ★★★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Keep your intentions a secret until you are sure you can deliver. Love is on the rise, and planning something special will bring high returns. Expanding your awareness, your family or your expectations is within reach. ★★★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Keep an eye out for anyone trying to mislead you. Jealousy is likely to take place if someone you compete with gets ahead. Use your energy to get ahead, not to find fault in what someone else does. ★★★★★

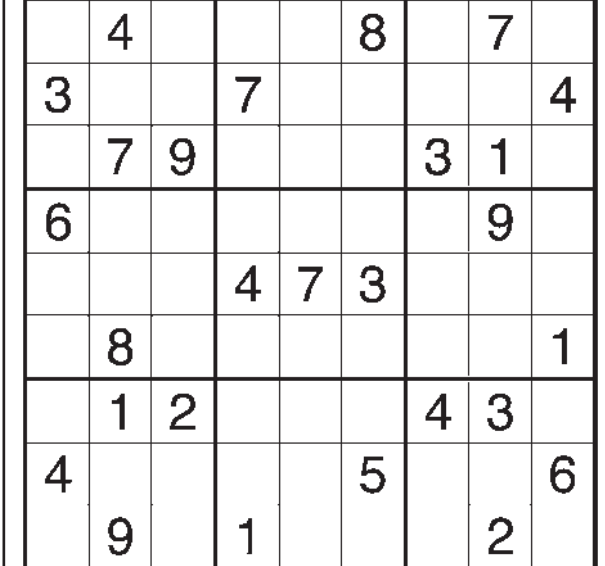
Birthday Baby: You are engaging, clever and outgoing. You are trendy and inventive.

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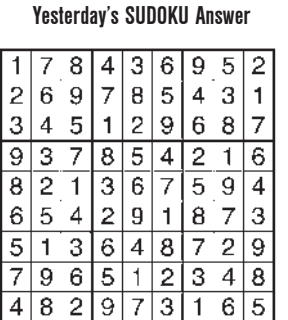
SUDOKU Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★★ 1/20

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.



Difficulty Level ★★ 1/20

WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

LAZY ANIMALS Solution: 7 letters

S R E T S M A H E O E E R T B
L I O N A P S A E T L E M U R
P A T E I D S Q A Z T H G L C
L L R M O Y S N U A O S E I K
O A E N G P R L E I O O G A I
H O N O A E P T O L R R N N T
S K I R B G N I L W A R P S T
I N K I U A S I H H L D E S E
G A H V Y T D H T O L S N L N
G D U N R A C E C H I D N A S
U A I E M M L O U N G I N G P
L P S R U O H G N I P E E L S
S T A C B A T S G I P O L F A
P A S S I V E V I T C A N I F
R O N A E M E D O R M O U S E

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Adapt, Armadillo, Bats, Bugs, Cats, Demeanor, Diet, Dormouse, Easygoing, Echidnas, Environment, Flop, Hamsters, Heat, Hibernate, Hippo, Hours, Inactive, Inert, Kittens, Koala, Lemur, Lethargic, Lion, Lounging, Naps, Nocturnal, Owls, Panda, Park, Passive, Pigs, Rest, Safe, Sleeping, Sloth, Slow, Sluggish, Snail, Snooze, Spiny Anteater, Sprawling, Squirrel, Tree

Yesterday's Answer: Aspiration

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- Managing inventory of assets and supplies, monitoring critical level of stocks, sourcing for suppliers and submitting invoice(s).
- Coordinating between departments and operating units in resolving day-to-day administrative and operational problems.
- Scheduling and coordinating meetings, interviews, events and other similar activities
- Sending out and receiving mail and packages; document handling.
- Preparing business correspondence (often using word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation computer software).
- Sending faxes.
- Managing files.
- Research and the identification of key data sources.
- Performing multifaceted general office support.
- Preparing meeting minutes, meeting notes and internal support materials.
- Sending and receiving forms for the company.
- Assisting in all day-to-day operation matters.
- Other related duties.

Education/Experience Needed:

- Good customer service, communication, and interpersonal skills.
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- Must have excellent computer skills, using Word, Excel and Powerpoint.
- Fluency in speaking, reading, and writing in English and Mandarin.
- Knowledge of accounting principles and practices.
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Seahawks rally stuns Packers in OT, 28-22



SEATTLE (AP)—The loudest stadium in America was silent. A return trip to the Super Bowl was slipping away.

Time for the Seattle Seahawks to show why they are champions.

"You have the belief these guys have in one another, there is nothing you can't do," coach Pete Carroll said after an implausible comeback for a 28-22 victory over Green Bay in the NFC championship game Sunday.

Plagued by turnovers and outplayed much of the day, the Seahawks staged a stunning rally built on resilience. Russell Wilson, who struggled until the final minutes, hit Jermaine Kearse for a 35-yard touchdown 3:19 into the extra period to win it.

The Seahawks became the first defending champion to make the Super Bowl in 10 years, and will play the AFC champion New England Patriots, who routed Indianapolis 45-7. How Seattle got there was stunning.

"The will and the drive of these men is unbelievable," Wilson said. "We always find a way to finish."

Seattle (14-4) trailed 19-7 with about four minutes remaining and had been ineffective on offense all game. Wilson finally put a drive together with passes to Doug Baldwin and Marshawn Lynch - initially ruled a touchdown but called back because he stepped out of bounds. Wilson finished with a 1-yard scoring run to cut the lead to 19-14 with 2:09 left.

The onside kick went high to Packers tight end Brandon Bostick, but he couldn't gather it, and Seattle's Chris Matthews recovered at the 50. The crowd, quiet since Seattle fell behind 16-0, came alive, and Lynch sped and powered his way to a

24-yard TD run. On the 2-point conversion, Wilson - about to be sacked - threw a desperate pass hauled in by Luke Willson to make it 22-19 with 1:25 remaining.

Aaron Rodgers, limping on an injured calf, calmly led the Packers (13-5) downfield to set up Mason Crosby's fifth field goal, a 48-yarder with 14 seconds to go to force overtime.

Then Wilson and Kearse struck, with Kearse - the target on all four of Wilson's interceptions - beating Tramon Williams on the winning pass. Kearse has also caught the winning score in last year's conference title win over San Francisco.

"Just making the plays at the end and keep believing," said Wilson, who was overwhelmed and sobbing after the game. "There was no doubt ... we had no doubt as a team."

Kearse, who has caught touchdown passes in four straight postseason games, and several other Seahawks leaped into the stands behind the end zone, saluting the stadium-record crowd of 68,538. Wilson ran through cameramen to jump on Kearse's back, and defensive end Michael Bennett borrowed a bicycle from a police officer and rode around the edge of the field saluting the "12s."

Until the final minutes, there seemed to be no doubt the Packers were headed to the big game Feb. 1 in Glendale, Arizona. Despite All-Pro Rodgers' injury, Green Bay and its overlooked defense was carrying the day.

"It's going to be a missed opportunity that I'll probably think about for the rest of my career," Rodgers said. "We were the better team today, we played well enough to win. We can't blame anybody but ourselves."

Special teams trickery lifted the Seahawks back into the game after falling behind 16-0.



AP
Seattle Seahawks' Richard Sherman (25) intercepts a pass in front of Green Bay Packers' Davante Adams (17) during the first half of the NFL football NFC Championship game Sunday, Jan. 18, 2015, in Seattle.

Their first touchdown came on a fake field goal when holder Jon Ryan threw 19 yards to tackle eligible Garry Gilliam in the third quarter. And Matthews' onside kick recovery kept the Seahawks alive.

Lynch rushed for 157 yards on 25 carries and was the one

consistent offensive force Seattle had. He was crucial to both late scoring drives in regulation.

And after the Packers tied it, Seattle wouldn't be denied in overtime, winning the coin toss and going 87 yards in six plays.

The 16-point comeback was the largest in the second half

in a conference title game. The Colts defeated the Patriots after trailing 21-6 in 2006.

"It takes everybody and everybody had to contribute to get that done," Carroll said. "It was so much heart, so much belief today. Somehow, somehow we pulled it out."

The matchup of Green Bay's top-ranked scoring offense against the league's stingiest defense instead was being controlled by the Packers' ability to stop - and turn over - the Seahawks. The five giveaways were the most in the Carroll era that began in 2010.

The silence of the fans was remarkable for much of the windy, intermittently rain day. Rookie safety Ha Ha Clinton-Dix had two interceptions and Green Bay sacked Wilson five times.

Yet it wasn't enough. "I felt our football team was a special group. They've been great all year," coach Mike McCarthy said. "This is a hard one to swallow."

Patriots 45, Colts 7

In Foxborough, Bill Belichick and Tom Brady are headed to a special place where no coach or player has gone more—the Super Bowl.

They earned their trip with the second most lopsided AFC championship victory ever.

The New England Patriots dominant duo earned a sixth trip to the Super Bowl with a 45-7 wipeout of the Indianapolis Colts in the AFC championship game before a raucous, rain-soaked crowd Sunday night.

Scoring touchdowns on their first four second-half possessions, the Patriots (14-4) moved on to face defending champion Seattle (14-4) for the NFL title on Feb. 1 in Glendale, Arizona. Belichick will face Pete Carroll, whom he replaced as Patriots coach 2000. The Seahawks beat the Green Bay Packers 28-22 in overtime in the NFC title game.

"I only have one thing to say. We're on to Seattle," Belichick said, echoing the statement he repeated several times, "We're on to Cincinnati," after a 41-14 loss at Kansas City dropped the Patriots to 2-2.

Brady threw three touchdown passes, LeGarrette Blount ran 30 times for 148 yards and three scores and the Patriots charged away after leading just 17-7 at halftime.

"I know we've had some ups and downs this year," Brady said, "but right now we're up, baby, and we're going to try to stay up for one more game."

In his first year as a starter, Brady led the Patriots to a Super Bowl win in the 2001 season, starting a run of three championships in four years. Now he and Belichick have a chance for their first in 10 years.

Brady completed 23 of 35 passes for 226 yards before being replaced by Jimmy Garoppolo with 3:20 left. Brady went to the sideline where he was embraced by Belichick. Moments earlier, while sitting on the bench, Brady was shown on the video board with soaked hair. He pumped his fist in the air 12 times then slapped hands with teammates.

The biggest blowout in AFC title history was Buffalo's 51-3 win over the Los Angeles Raiders in the 1990 season.

For Colts quarterback Andrew Luck, it was the worst game of his three-year career and the fourth rout in his four career games against the Patriots, all by at least three touchdowns. He completed 12 of 33 passes for 126 yards, no touchdowns and two interceptions.

"My play wasn't up to par to give you a chance to beat a great team," he said.

He lost 43-22 in last season's divisional playoff with Blount rushing for 166 yards and four touchdowns. And on Nov. 16, he lost 43-22 as Jonas Gray rushed for 201 yards and four touchdowns.

SIDEBAR

Super matchup: Seahawks vs Patriots

For Russell Wilson's Seattle Seahawks to become the first team in a decade to win consecutive Super Bowls, they'll have to beat the most recent group to do it, Tom Brady's New England Patriots.

In an enticing matchup pitting the defending champions against the dominant NFL franchise of the 2000s, the NFC's Seahawks (14-4) will face the AFC's Patriots (14-4) in the title game at Glendale, Arizona, in two weeks.

New England reached its eighth Super Bowl, equaling the Dallas Cowboys and Pittsburgh Steelers for most in league history. It's the sixth time quarterback Brady and coach Bill Belichick made it in the past 14 years; they won trophies after the 2001, 2003 and

2004 seasons.

But they lost in their past two appearances, after the 2007 and 2011 seasons, both times against Eli Manning and the New York Giants.

Some Las Vegas sports books had the Seahawks—heading to the franchise's third Super Bowl—as 1-point favorites, while others made the game a pick 'em.

A year ago, Seattle beat Peyton Manning and the Denver Broncos 43-8 in the big game. In nearly a half-century of Super Bowls - this will be the 49th - there's never been so long a stretch without a repeat champion.

But with coach Pete Carroll, Belichick's predecessor with the Patriots, and general manager John Schneider in charge,

Seattle has the makings of a dynasty, thanks to cool-as-can-be Wilson, cornerback Richard Sherman and the first defense since the 1985-86 Chicago Bears to give up the fewest points and fewest yards two seasons in a row.

Wilson set aside four interceptions and a 16-point deficit to lead the Seahawks past the Green Bay Packers 28-22 in overtime in the NFC championship game Sunday, Seattle's eighth straight victory. No team had ever won a conference title game after trailing by more than 15 points until Wilson helped produce two touchdowns in a 44-second span late in the fourth quarter, then threw a 35-yard TD pass to Jermaine Kearse on the first drive of OT.

There were all sorts of key

moments in the topsy-turvy game, including punter Jon Ryan's touchdown pass on a fake field goal for Seattle's first points, and a successful onside kick for the Seahawks after Green Bay's Brandon Bostick failed to hold onto the football.

"Everybody thought we were out of this game," said Wilson, a third-year quarterback who also was drafted by a Major League Baseball team. "You just trust the experience. You trust the guys you have around you."

A week ago, the Patriots became the first team to erase two holes of at least 14 points in a postseason game, but they needed no such comeback Sunday night, completely outclassing the Indianapolis Colts 45-7 for the AFC title.

Splitter, Leonard lead Spurs to 89-69 win over Jazz



SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Tiago Splitter scored 14 points, Kawhi Leonard had 12 points and nine rebounds and the San Antonio Spurs never trailed while holding

Utah to a season-low scoring total in an 89-69 victory over the Jazz on Sunday night.

Tim Duncan added 11 points in 23 minutes for San Antonio, which has won three straight — including the last two with Leonard back in the lineup.

Rudy Gobert had 13 points and a season-high 18 rebounds and Gordon Hayward added 10 points for Utah. The Jazz shot 33 percent while also setting season lows in points by a San Antonio opponent for the game and in the first half (27).

Utah beat San Antonio 100-96 on Dec. 9 in a game that Leonard initially injured his right hand, suffering a small tear to a ligament while bracing his fall following a failed dunk attempt.

Leonard gave the Spurs another scare Sunday when he remained down for about 45 seconds after tumbling to the floor following a hard foul by Gobert with 9:14 left in the first half. Leonard flexed and gripped his right hand but remained in the game and showed no further

Utah Jazz forward Derrick Favors, left, battles for the rebound against San Antonio Spurs forward Tiago Splitter (22) of Brazil during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Jan. 18, 2015, in San Antonio.

aggravation while shooting 4 for 11 from the field.

The Spurs used quick successive passes to score eight of their first 12 points in the paint against a Jazz team that was averaging 5.8 blocks per game.

Tony Parker wrapped a bounce pass around Enes Kanter toward the basket for a cutting Splitter, who avoided a charging defender by passing to Duncan for an open layup.

After the starting unit established a presence inside, San Antonio's reserves were 3 for 5 on 3-pointers.

After struggling to retain its halftime lead in its previous home games, San Antonio increased their advantage to 19 points in the third quarter.

The sizable lead enabled the Spurs to limit veterans Duncan, Parker and Manu Ginobili to less than 24 minutes.

Pelicans 95, Raptors 93

In Toronto, Tyreke Evans scored on a driving layup with less than 2 seconds to go and



the New Orleans Pelicans beat Toronto 95-93 on Sunday, their first victory in seven meetings with the Raptors.

Evans scored 26 points, and Alexis Ajinca had 22 to help the Pelicans win without injured starters Anthony Davis and Jrue Holiday. Davis and Holiday sat out for the second straight game. Davis is side-

lined by a sprained toe on his left foot, and Holiday has a sore right ankle.

Pelicans coach Monty Williams said Davis could return Monday night at New York against the Knicks, but said he won't rush the former first overall pick back into the lineup because of how hard Davis plays.

Eric Gordon added 14 points for New Orleans, and Omer Asik had 11.

DeMar DeRozan led Toronto with 22 points, and Amir Johnson had 14 points and 10 rebounds. The Raptors have lost seven of their last nine games.

Lou Williams added 17 points, Greivis Vasquez had 16 and Patrick Patterson 10

for Toronto.

New Orleans trailed 85-73 with 6:39 left, but a three-point play by Gordon and a pair of free throws by Ajinca capped a 9-0 run that brought the Pelicans to 87-85 with 3:13 remaining.

Thunder 127, Magic 99

In Orlando, there's no question the Oklahoma City Thunder have had their struggles at times on the road this season.

Their performance against the Magic could be a big step in changing that.

Kevin Durant had 21 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists, and Oklahoma City ran past Orlando 127-99 on Sunday night.

Russell Westbrook finished with 17 points and six assists, and Serge Ibaka and Dion Waiters each added 16 points.

The Thunder never trailed, and led by 38 on their way to snapping a four-game road losing streak. They also shot 57 percent in the first of five road games in nine nights.

"We started the game with a lot of energy, a lot of effort, the defense was good and we passed the ball really well tonight," Durant said. "Everybody touched the ball. ... We were aggressive attacking the rim and we found the open jump-shooters. We can't look too far down the road; we're always worried about today."

Victor Oladipo led Orlando with 23 points. Elfrid Payton added 19 points and eight assists.

The Magic gave up a franchise-record 79 first-half points on their way to dropping their second straight game. The Thunder were also the sixth consecutive opponent to score 100 or more points against them.

Ivanovic out in 1st round of Aussie Open

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Fifth-seeded Ana Ivanovic struggled with her serve and lost in three sets to Czech qualifier Lucie Hradecka in first big upset of the Australian Open.

The former No. 1-ranked Ivanovic, a finalist at the 2008 Australian Open, breezed through the first set in 21 minutes with three service breaks on Monday before No. 142-ranked Hradecka rallied to win their first-round match 1-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Ivanovic, who had a tour-leading 58 match wins in 2014 and started this season by reaching the final at the Brisbane International, had 10 double-faults and made 30 unforced errors and slumped to her earliest exit in a major since 2011.

"The whole match I didn't really feel like myself out there," Ivanovic said. "It's probably the worst thing could happen. But still, the year is young and I really have to now sit and work on few things and just maybe try to have a different approach to this kind of event and try to see what was lacking."

For Hradecka, it made amends for a missed opportunity in her only previous meeting with Ivanovic, when she wasted a match point be-

fore losing in the first round at Wimbledon in 2009.

"I was so nervous in the beginning, same at the end," said Hradecka, who has never advanced past the second round at a major. "My hand was so shaky."

Three other seeded players were eliminated in early first-round matches in the women's draw, while No. 3 Simone Halep advanced with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Karin Knapp of Italy.

Caroline Garcia beat No. 27 and two-time major winner Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-4, 6-2, Kristina Mladenovic beat No. 28 Sabine Lisicki 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 and Julia Goerges routed No. 32 Belinda Bencic 6-2, 6-1.

Two-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray beat Indian qualifier Yuki Bhambhani 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (3), beginning his quest for an elusive Australian Open title.

Murray, who won the 2012 U.S. Open and 2013 Wimbledon, has lost three finals at Melbourne Park.

No. 10 Grigor Dimitrov opened with a 6-2, 6-3, 6-2 win over Dustin Brown 6-2, 6-3, 6-2, No. 29 Jeremy Chardy beat Borna Coric 3-6, 6-4, 7-5, 6-4 and No. 32 Martin Klizan had a 7-6 (6), 6-2, 6-4 win over Tatsuma Ito of Japan.



Jimmy Walker tops Sony Open by record 9 strokes

HONOLULU (AP)—Jimmy Walker was getting coffee Sunday morning when he saw that U.S. Open champion Martin Kaymer had lost a 10-shot lead with 13 holes to play in Abu Dhabi. He went back to his room and told his wife, "Winning is hard."

Later that afternoon, Walker made it look easy.

With the most impressive performance of his career, Walker blew away the field Sunday in the Sony Open by closing with a 7-under 63 to win by nine shots, a record margin for the tournament and the biggest rout on the PGA Tour in nearly six years.

Walker watched Jordan Spieth win the Hero World Challenge last month by 10 shots against an 18-man field and wondered if he was on another planet.

"And that's kind of the way it feels when you watch those performances," Walker said.

"You see them and are like, 'Man, what golf course is that guy playing?' And to be able to say you've done that and you've distanced yourself like that, it's really cool. I think it's a good learning experience. Definitely happy to keep the pedal down."

The timing could not have been better.

Six days ago on Maui, Walker lost a tournament he felt he should have won. Sunday on Oahu, he played like he was on his own island.

On a course that lends itself to a free-for-all, Walker shot 62-63 on the weekend and never gave anyone much of a chance. The previous Sony Open record for margin of victory was seven shots, last done by Paul Azinger in 2000. Walker became the first repeat winner of this tournament since Ernie Els in 2004.

Scott Piercy closed with a 66

to finish alone in second. Matt Kuchar, who started the final round two shots out of the lead, didn't make a birdie and shot 71 to tie for third with Harris English and Gary Woodland, who each had a 67. Kuchar ended his streak of 255 rounds on the PGA Tour with at least one birdie.

But this was Walker's show, and it came with a small measure of redemption. Walker had a three-shot lead with five holes to play at Kapalua last Monday when he wound up losing to Patrick Reed in a play-off at the Tournament of Champions. With a quick turnaround, he quickly put it behind him.

"I really wanted to finish out the day like I didn't do last week," Walker said. He finished at 23-under 257.

The text message Sunday morning from swing coach Butch Harmon was to "keep the

pedal down today." The message from caddie Andy Sanders over just about every putt was, "Don't let up."

The decisive moment came at the par-4 eighth hole. Walker and Kuchar both opened with seven straight pars, and Walker stuffed his pitching wedge from 126 yards to 3 feet for birdie. Kuchar pulled his tee shot into the royal palms, punched out short of the green and made bogey.

That two-shot swing gave Walker a four-shot lead, and he was on his way.

"I felt like up to that point everything was kind of stale," Walker said. "I was playing hard, and I hit some really good shots on the first three holes, just didn't make a putt and finally got it open and I finally made the putt. Made a good birdie on 9, another one on 10, and the putts starting go in after that."

Quitugua rules Filtaga/Emon Lodge golf

By JON PEREZ

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REPORTER

Danny Quitugua survived Saturday's early morning downpour to become \$500 richer after ruling the Filtaga/Eman Lodge 179 Master Golf tournament held at the Marianas Country Club in Marpi.

Quitugua shot a 51 and 40 on the front and back nines of MCC's 6,449-yard layout but with the tournament using a Double Peoria format, he earned a 28.8 handicap and net score of 62.2.

The Peoria format is a one-day handicapping system that is mostly used in charity fundraising events and company outings since most golfers don't have real handicap indexes. Organizers, under the Peoria format, secretly choose six holes—two par 3s, two par 4s and two par 5s—on the front and back nines before the start of the tournament. The players don't know which holes have been picked.

Quitugua enjoyed a 5.2 winning margin over his closest pursuer Larry Pascual, who came in second place with a gross 89, but he only had a 21.6 handicap for a net score of 67.4 to pocket the \$300 cash prize.

Jacinto Ramones rounded up the Top 3 finishers with a net 68.8—88



JON PEREZ

From left, Danny Quitugua's son, Larry Pascual, and Jacinto Ramones pose for a photo with an Emon Lodge member after receiving the Top 3 prizes in the Filtaga/Eman Lodge 179 Master Golf tournament held last Saturday at the Marianas Country Club in Marpi.

gross score and 19.2 handicap. He went home with \$200.

Pascual, however, matched Quitugua's cash prize after clinching two of the four closest to the pins in the Toshio Suzuki-designed golf course. He was the closest at the par-3 No.12 at 5.2 feet then was 17.25 feet away at No. 8,

which was another par-3 hole.

Rudy Sablan claimed hole No. 6 after landing 1.8 feet away from the pin, while William Retardo was 6.6 feet away for the final closest to the pin contest at No. 16.

The Top 3 finishers joined 42 other golfers who survived the rain-soaked

golf course during the one-day fundraising tournament.

Tournament organizers thanked everyone who joined and the sponsors for donating various raffle prizes. Proceeds from the weekend event will go to the Karidat Foundation for its various charity works.

5 teams stay in contention for Rocball crown



Only five teams are left to battle for the championship in the 2015 Rocball League.

Still standing after eight rounds and 40 regular season games are the Benchwarmers, Local Motion, Veterans, Oba Squirt, and Teachers, while G.V.D., Mix, Nameless, IDGU, and Happy are eliminated.

The Benchwarmers lead the team standings with their 8-0 record, followed by the Veterans (7-1), Local Motion (6-2), and Teachers and Oba Squirt, which hold similar 5-3 records.

Only the Top 4 teams will advance to the semifinals, which will be a best-of-three affair. The finals is a best-of-five showdown.

Meanwhile, the Veterans are also leading the league in the combined two-point and three-point plays with their 88 and 6. The Benchwarmers are in second with 78 two-point plays and 3 three-point plays, while Local Motion is ranked third with 59 two-point plays and 8 three-point plays. Two points are given to a kee, xunk, ace, and jam, while a goal is equivalent to three points. *(Saipan Tribune)*

Saipan Little League sets meeting Wednesday



The Saipan Little League Baseball Inc. board is calling managers and coaches of all competing teams this season to attend a meeting tomorrow at 5:30pm at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The main agenda is the final opening day of the 2015 season and other matters concerning the league.

The SLLBI board also said that the same day will be the deadline for submission of all team rosters, eligibility requirements, and other documents.

A total of 26 teams will be playing in

the 2015 Saipan Little League with 13 competing in the 9-12 division while four squads each are joining the Junior (12-14) and Big (15-18) leagues. Five will be contending for the Senior league (13-16) crown.

The SLLBI board is hoping to start the season later this month so they could

finish early and allow the four All-Star teams a longer time to practice and prepare for the CNMI district and Asia-Pacific-Middle East regional tournaments.

Saipan, reportedly, will be hosting the Asia-Pacific-Middle East regional tournaments in the Junior, Senior and Big leagues. *(Jon Perez)*

AWARDS

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sa's Angel Sally and Evan Belcher received the same recognition.

Sally earned the Golden Boot award in the girls U15 division after tallying 21 goals. She was the runaway winner and the only player in her division to record more than 10 goals, as second finisher Diana Maniacop of Shirley's Lady Blues scored only 9. Girly Flowers & Rainbows' Mary Kay Alferos and the Orange Rangers' Paulyn Grace Joyce were ranked third and fourth after registering 8 and 6 goals, respectively.

Sally and her Matansa team collected 30 goals in the double-round robin elimination with Bernadette Horey and Pinyarat Shankweiller adding 4 apiece and Lyka Sally making 1. Girly Flowers & Rainbows scored the second most goals in the

division (22) with Chloe Salvosa (3), Catherine Barrozo (3), Gillian Vilagomez (2), Chevy Kate Alipio (2), Guine Borja (2), and Renita Fleming (1) adding to Alferos's 8.

Lady Blues had 21 with De Jana Muna chipping in 3, Mia Carreon and Jerlyn Castillo logging 2 each, and Jasmine Phan, Negahr Rastguiy, Magat, and Jobelle Tabuena recording one apiece. Orange Rangers posted 14, getting 5 from Princess Alcantara and one each from Christine Noble, Bernalyn Camacho, and Christelle Itaas besides the 6 of Joyce.

In the boys U15 division, Belcher led the way with his 15 goals, three up against Astig Futsal's Anthony Fruit. Real Crispy Pata's Bada Lee had the third best with 7, while the Orange Rangers' Andrew Omelau finished fourth with 2 goals.

Astig Futsal topped the goals production in the elimination with its 34,

followed by Matansa (31), Real Crispy Pata (26), and the Orange Rangers (3).

JC Piring was the second best scorer for Matansa with 6, followed by Jonah Pohl (4) and Jonathan Capayas and Davy Laxa, who had 3 each. Mareko Tekopua contributed 8 to Astig Futsal, which drew 6 goals from James Ermitanio and 4 apiece from Joshua De Leon and Hark Galarion. On Real Crispy Pata's side, Edwin Kim added 6, Cody Leon and Joshua Abragan made 6 each, and Christopher Aninzo had 3, while John Mark Anastacio was only the second scorer for the Orange Rangers, earning one goal.

Meanwhile, Sisig United, Girly Flowers & Rainbows, and the Orange Rangers (boys U15) received the fair play award in their respective divisions. The recognition was given to teams that committed the least fouls and yellow and red cards during the elimination round.

KAGMAN

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Palace (0-5), and Rollers 3 (0-5) complete the standings.

Jason Lampkin top-scored in Kagman's rout of Sun Palace with his 17 points, while Jesse Santos and Allen Yu backed him up, adding 15 and 10, respectively.

Lampkin and company dominated Sun Palace in the second half after the latter kept Kagman within striking distance in the first 20 minutes of place. Kagman was just ahead by 6 points at the break, 27-21, before the trio of Lampkin, Santos, and Yu teamed up in the second-half breakaway.

In the other U19 tiff, Dream Team squandered a double-digit lead in the first half, but hung on tight in the closing minutes of the final frame to beat Rollers 2.

Dream Team enjoyed a 12-point spread at halftime, 36-24, thanks to Ignacio Borja's 12 first-half points. However, the deficit was trimmed to single digit in the second half as Rollers 3 began to hit shots from downtown.

Rollers 2 connected seven baskets from beyond the arc in the second half, but failed to complete the come-from-behind win, as Shane Deleon Guerrero and Dixon Kwon came to Dream Team's rescue. The duo combined for Dream Team's last 7 points and made important free throws in the home-stretch to foil Rollers 2's bid.

Borja paced Dream Team with his

22 markers, while Deleon Guerrero and Kwon also finished in twin digits, contributing 17 and 13, respectively.

Meanwhile, in the lone women's division game last Friday, Armatech defeated Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, 40-22, to extend its win streak to seven.

Rachel Abrams suited up for Armatech after missing their Thursday's match against Shirley's Coffee Shop and led her team with her 12 points. Irish Pagarao, Jeralyn Castillo, and Chevy Kate Alipio combined for 25 more points to outgun the entire Fiesta crew.

First Game

Kagman 72—Lampkin 17, Je. Santos 15, Yu 10, Jo. Santos 6, Palino 4, Prado 4, Paran 4, Lizama 4, Li 4.

Sun Palace 34—Omengkar 9, Ocaya 6, Pamintuan 6, Venezuela 5, Ringor 2.

Scoring by halves: 27-21, 72-34.

Second Game

Armtech 40—Abrams 12, Pagarao 9, Alipio 8, Castillo 8, Pangilinan 2, Alferos 1.

Fiesta 22—Pena 10, Francisco 8, Reyes 2, Lee 2.

Scoring by halves: 16-11, 40-22.

Third Game

Dream Team 73—I. Borja 22, S. Deleon Guerrero 17, Kwon 13, Castro 6, Darag 5, Sanchez 4, Francisco 3.

Rollers 2 67—Alipio 20, Cruz 16, Dancoe 15, Rios 6, Deocares 4, Cudia 2, Santos 2.

Scoring by halves: 36-24, 73-67.

CNMI

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"We have a lot of good young players in the Big League. Plus, we also have those in U21 in the SBL. So, I'm confident we can form a very competitive team," said the two time gold medal-winning manager.

Rogolifoi guided Team CNMI to the 2006 Micronesian Games gold medal and duplicated the feat in the 2011 Pacific Games in New Caledonia.

The CNMI defeated Guam in the

battle for the gold in 2006, 3-2, and five years later scored an 8-4 win over host New Caledonia in the finals of the 2011 Pacific Games.

American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Guam, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Solomon Islands are the other BCO members.

The CNMI was supposed to join the U18 tournament as it was originally set at the Paseo Stadium in Guam, but organizers decided to

move it to New Zealand.

Rogolifoi chose not to send a team due to lack of funds and the high cost of traveling to New Zealand.

The champion of the BCO U18 tournament will represent the Oceania region in the 2015 International Baseball Federation 18U World Championships in Nishinomiya, Hyogo Prefecture in Japan.

The Oceania regional champion will compete against 11 other teams from Africa (one), Americas (five), Asia (three), and Europe (two).

SBA/Budweiser 8-Ball League Banquet

Photos By
JON PEREZ



Run-the-rack winners Chester Cuento (Thursday League), left, and Rey Pinangay (Tuesday League).



Jokers Bar & Grill's Clarence Ocampo, right, receives a plaque from Pacific Amusement's Cecil Vivero.



Smoke Pub owner Maria Lee Bignayan Labadan, left, and a Sang&D'Gang member receive the Tuesday League Sportsmanship Award.



Nong Detdon, left, and Nolan Cultura are the Thursday and Tuesday leagues' top performers.



Finals most valuable players Jerry Soriano (Thursday),left, and Marc Brian Nelvis (Tuesday), show their trophies.

MARPAC sales manager for beverage and tobacco James Lee, center, receives a plaque of appreciation from Pacific Amusement's Cecil Vivero and Saipan Billiards Association league secretary Warlee Ellama for MARPAC's continued support to SBA during the league's awards banquet last Sunday at the Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret.



Jonny's Team SCS is the recipient of the Thursday League Sportsmanship Award.



Members of the regular season champions Route33 Armatech Hustlers pose for a group photo.



**Splitter, Leonard
lead Spurs to 89-69
win over Jazz**

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**Seahawks rally
stuns Packers
in OT, 28-22**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

3 get Golden Boot awards

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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Team Betde's Thaiphi Austria scored the most goals in the three divisions plays in the 2014 SSS Christmas Youth Futsal Tournament to lead two other Golden Boot awardees.

Austria, who had a hat-trick in their 7-5 title win over the Lil' Rascals last Saturday, collected 26 goals in the six games in the double-round robin elimination to take the Golden Boot award in the co-ed U12 division. He edged the Lil'



Rascal's Mark Esalan for the coveted award as the latter gained 24, while Sisig United's Rintaro Miyawaki finished third in the race with his 18 goals. The Orange Rangers' Merrick Toves was ranked fourth in the Golden Boot contest after recording a

team-best 13 goals. Other multiple goals scorers in the division were Sisig United's Eun Syu Hahn (8) and Rinto Takahashi (4), Lil' Rascals' Taka Borja (3), Katherine Magat (3), and Go Sekiguchi (2), Team Betde's John Michael Rojas (11) and Kohtaro Goto (2), and the Orange Rangers' Sebastian Manabat (6), and Jaydee Jose (3).

Austria received a medal for his feat during the awards ceremony for the tournament last Saturday night at the TSL Sports Complex, while Matan-

**See AWARDS on
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Austria



Sally



Belcher

CNMI to bid for U21 baseball tournament

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER



The CNMI is planning to submit a bid for hosting the 2015 Baseball Confederation of Oceania Under-21 tournament, which is set in December.

Northern Marianas Sports Association executive director and Saipan Baseball League

coordinator Tony Rogolifoi said he will know in less than two weeks the process of submitting the bid.

"We want to host the tournament. We want to bring this tournament in the CNMI, here at the Francisco M. 'Tan Ko' Palacios baseball field," said Rogolifoi in yesterday's interview.

BCO is expected to meet in New Zealand later this month to discuss the bidding process for the U21 tournament. The meet-

ing will happen simultaneously with the U18 tournament, which was originally slated in Guam.

Rogolifoi is hoping that the CNMI could clinch the rights of hosting the tournament since it would also help the businesses here on Saipan.

He is also optimistic that the CNMI can form a strong and competitive team that would go up against the 13 other member nations of BCO.

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Kagman, Dream Team boost semis bids

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Kagman Risers and Dream Team earned contrasting wins to strengthen their semis chances in the 2014 Tan Holdings Basketball Classic last Friday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Kagman ripped Sun Palace Hotel in the first boys U19 game, 72-34, while Dream Team pulled off a 73-67 win over Rollers 2 in the nightcap to remain at the top half of the team standings in the eight-squad field.

Only the Top 4 teams after the single-round robin elimination will advance to playoff round. Dream Team is currently in second place with its 4-1 record behind the unbeaten Rollers 1 (5-0), while Kagman is in a tie for third to fifth place with the Ol' Aces and Sonics, holding a 3-2 card. Rollers 2 (2-3), Sun

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Kagman Risers' Allen Yu goes for an up-and-under shot against a Dream Team defender during an earlier game in the 2014 Tan Holdings Basketball Classic at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium. Dream Team and Kagman won their respective U19 games last Friday.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO